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MANNERS
AND
SPEECH

or

MAXIMS EXTRACTED FROM
LORD CHESTERFIELD'S
LETTERS TO HIS SON

GRIFFITH AND FARRAN
(SUCCESSORS TO NEWBERY & HARRIS)
WEST CORNER OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD, LONDON
1884

‘The World can doubtless never be well known by theory ; practice is absolutely necessary ; but surely it is of great use to a young man, before he sets out for that country full of mazes, windings, and turnings, to have at least a general map of it made by an experienced traveller ’

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The World and Society.



HUMAN NATURE.

1. Search with the greatest care into the characters of all those whom you converse with ; endeavour to discover their predominant passions, their prevailing weaknesses, their vanities, their follies, and their humours ; with all the right and wrong wise and silly springs of human actions, which make such inconsistent and whimsical beings of us rational creatures. A moderate share of penetration, with great attention, will infallibly make these necessary discoveries. This is the true knowledge of the world : and the world is a country which nobody ever yet knew by description ; one must travel through it one's self to be acquainted with it. The Scholar, who in the dust of his closet talks or writes of the world, knows no more of it than the Orator did of war, who judiciously endeavoured to instruct Hannibal in it. Courts and camps are the only places to learn the world in. There alone, all kinds of characters resort, and human nature is seen in all the various shapes and modes which education, custom, and habit give it : whereas, in all other places one local mode generally prevails, and produces a seeming, though not a real, sameness of character. For example, one

general mode distinguishes a university, another a trading town, a third, a seaport town, and so on ; whereas, at a capital, where the prince or the Supreme Power resides, some of all these various modes are to be seen, and seen in action too, exerting their utmost skill in pursuit of their several objects. Human nature is the same all over the world, but its operations are so varied by education and habit, that one must see it in all its dresses, in order to be intimately acquainted with it. The passion of ambition, for instance, is the same in the courtier, a soldier, or an ecclesiastic ; but from their different educations and habits, they will take very different methods to gratify it. Civility, which is a disposition to accommodate and oblige others, is essentially the same in every country ; but good breeding, as it is called, which is the manner of exerting that disposition, is different in almost every country, and merely local ; and every man of sense imitates and conforms to that local good breeding of the place which he is at. A conformity and flexibility of manners is necessary in the course of the world ; that is, with regard to all things which are not wrong in themselves. The *versatile ingenium* is the most useful of all. It can turn itself instantly from one object to another, assuming the proper manner for each. It can be serious with the grave, cheerful with the gay, and trifling with the frivolous. Endeavour, by all means, to acquire this talent, for it is a very great one.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD.

2. A seeming ignorance is very often a most necessary part of worldly knowledge. It is, for instance, commonly advisable to seem ignorant of what people offer to tell you ;

and when they say, Have not you heard of such a thing? to answer No, and to let them go on, though you know it already. Some have a pleasure in telling it, because they think that they tell it well; others have a pride in it, as being the sagacious discoverers; and many have a vanity in showing that they have been, though very undeservedly, trusted: all these would be disappointed, and consequently displeased, if you said Yes.

3. The most material knowledge of all, I mean the knowledge of the world, is never to be acquired without great attention; and I know many old people, who, though they have lived long in the world, are but children still as to the knowledge of it, from their levity and inattention. Certain forms which all people comply with, and certain arts, which all people aim at, hide, in some degree, the truth, and give a general exterior resemblance to almost everybody. Attention and sagacity must see through that veil, and discover the natural character.

4. This knowledge of the world teaches us more particularly two things, both which are of infinite consequence, and to neither of which nature inclines us; I mean, the command of our temper and of our countenance. A man who has no *monde* is inflamed with anger, or annihilated with shame, at every disagreeable incident: the one makes him act and talk like a madman, the other makes him look like a fool. But a man who has *du monde* seems not to understand what he cannot or ought not to resent. If he makes a slip himself, he recovers it by his coolness, instead of plunging deeper by his confusion, like a stumbling horse. He is firm, but gentle; and practises that most excellent maxim, *suaviter in modo, fortiter in re*. The other is the *volto sciolto e pensieri stretti*. People unused to the

world have babbling countenances ; and are unskilful enough to show what they have sense enough not to tell. In the course of the world, a man must very often put on an easy, frank countenance upon very disagreeable occasions ; he must seem pleased when he is very much otherwise ; he must be able to accost, and receive with smiles, those whom he would much rather meet with swords. In courts he must not turn himself inside out. All this may, nay must, be done without falsehood and treachery : for it must go no further than politeness and manners, and must stop short of assurances and professions of simulated friendship. Good manners, to those one does not love, are no more a breach of truth than 'your humble servant' at the bottom of a challenge is ; they are universally agreed upon, and understood, to be things of course. They are necessary guards of the decency and peace of society : they must only act defensively ; and then not with arms poisoned with perfidy. ✓ Truth, but not the whole truth, must be the invariable principle of every man, who hath either religion, honour, or prudence. Those who violate it may be cunning, but they are not able. Lies and perfidy are the refuge of fools and cowards.

5. All acts of civility are, by common consent, understood to be no more than a conformity to custom, for the quiet and conveniency of society, the *agrémens* of which are not to be disturbed by private dislikes and jealousies.

6. A man who does not possess himself enough to hear disagreeable things without visible marks of anger and change of countenance, or agreeable ones without sudden bursts of joy and expansion of countenance, is at the mercy of every artful knave or pert coxcomb ; the former will provoke or please you by design, to catch unguarded words or looks, by which he will easily decipher the secrets of your

heart, of which you should keep the key yourself, and trust it with no man living ; the latter will, by his absurdity, and without intending it, produce the same discoveries, of which other people will avail themselves.

7. Though men are all of one composition, the several ingredients are so differently proportioned in each individual, that no two are exactly alike ; and no one, at all times, like himself. The ablest man will sometimes do weak things ; the proudest man, mean things ; the honestest man, ill things ; and the wickedest man, good ones. Study individuals, then ; and if you take (as you ought to do) their outlines from their prevailing passion, suspend your last finishing strokes till you have attended to and discovered the operations of their inferior passions, appetites, and humours. A man's general character may be that of the honestest man of the world ; do not dispute it ; you might be thought envious or ill-natured : but, at the same time, do not take this probity upon trust, to such a degree as to put your life, fortune, or reputation, in his power. This honest man may happen to be your rival in power, in interest, or in love ; three passions that often put honesty to most severe trials, in which it is too often cast : but first analyse this honest man yourself : and then, only, you will be able to judge how far you may, or may not, with safety, trust him.

8. A man requires very little knowledge and experience of the world, to understand glaring, high coloured, and decided characters ; they are but few, and they strike at first : but to distinguish the almost imperceptible shades, and the nice gradations of virtue and vice, sense and folly, strength and weakness (of which characters are commonly composed), demands some experience, great observation, and minute attention.

9. In the same cases most people do the same things, but with this material difference, upon which the success commonly turns,—A man who hath studied the world knows when to time, and where to place them : he hath analysed the characters he applies to, and adapted his address and his arguments to them : but a man of what is called plain good sense, who hath only reasoned by himself, and not acted with mankind, mistimes, misplaces, runs precipitately and bluntly at the mark, and falls upon his nose in the way.

10. People know very little of the world, and talk nonsense, when they talk of plainness and solidity unadorned : they will do in nothing : mankind has been long out of a state of nature, and the golden age of native simplicity will never return. Whether for the better or the worse, no matter ; but we are refined ; and plain manners, plain dress, and plain diction, would as little do in life, as acorns, herbage, and the water of the neighbouring spring, would do at table.

RETICENCE NECESSARY.

11. Every man is not ambitious, or covetous, or passionate ; but every man has pride enough in his composition to feel and resent the least slight and contempt. Remember, therefore, most carefully to conceal your contempt, however just, wherever you would not make an implacable enemy. Men are much more unwilling to have their weaknesses and their imperfections known, than their crimes ; and, if you hint to a man that you think him silly, ignorant, or even ill-bred or awkward, he will hate you more, and longer, than if you tell him plainly that you think him a rogue. Never yield to that temptation which, to most young men, is very

strong, of exposing other people's weaknesses and infirmities, for the sake either of diverting the company, or of showing your own superiority. You may get the laugh on your side by it for the present ; but you will make enemies by it for ever ; and even those who laugh with you then will, upon reflection, fear, and consequently hate you : besides that, it is ill-natured ; and a good heart desires rather to conceal, than expose, other people's weaknesses or misfortunes. If you have wit, use it to please, and not to hurt : you may shine, like the sun in the temperate zones, without scorching. Here it is wished for ; under the line it is dreaded.

12. Extend your desire of praise a little beyond the strictly praiseworthy ; or else you may be apt to discover too much contempt for at least three parts in five of the world ; who will never forgive it you. In the mass of mankind, I fear, there is too great a majority of fools and knaves ; who, singly from their number, must to a certain degree be respected, though they are by no means respectable. And a man who will show every knave or fool that he thinks him such, will engage in a most ruinous war, against numbers much superior to those that he and his allies can bring into the field. Abhor a knave, and pity a fool in your heart ; but let neither of them, unnecessarily, see that you do so. Some complaisance and attention to fools is prudent, and not mean : as a silent abhorrence of individual knaves is often necessary, and not criminal.

13. There is no living in the world without a complaisant indulgence for people's weaknesses, and innocent, though ridiculous vanities. If a man has a mind to be thought wiser, and a woman handsomer, than they really are, their error is a comfortable one to themselves, and an innocent

one with regard to other people ; and I would rather make them my friends by indulging them in it, than my enemies by endeavouring (and that to no purpose) to undeceive them

THE LOWEST WORTH REGARDING.

14. Fools, and low people, are always jealous of their dignity, and never forget nor forgive what they reckon a slight. On the other hand, they take civility, and a little attention, as a favour ; remember, and acknowledge it : this, in my mind, is buying them cheap ; and, therefore, they are worth buying.

15. Be convinced that there are no persons so insignificant and inconsiderable, but may, some time or other, and in some thing or other, have it in their power to be of use to you ; which they certainly will not, if you have once shown them contempt. Wrongs are often forgiven, but contempt never is. Our pride remembers it for ever. It implies a discovery of weaknesses, which we are much more careful to conceal than crimes.

16. Many a man will confess his crimes to a common friend, but I never knew a man who would tell his silly weaknesses to his most intimate one. As many a friend will tell us our faults without reserve, who will not so much as hint at our follies : that discovery is too mortifying to our self-love, either to tell another, or to be told of one's self.

VERSATILITY.

17. There would be no living in the world, if one could not conceal, and even dissemble, the just causes of resentment, which one meets with every day in active and busy

life. Whoever cannot master his humour enough, *pour faire bonne mine à mauvais jeu*, should leave the world, and retire to some hermitage in an unfrequented desert. By showing an unavailing and sullen resentment, you authorise the resentment of those who can hurt you, and whom you cannot hurt ; and give them that very pretence, which perhaps they wished for, of breaking with and injuring you ; whereas the contrary behaviour would lay them under the restraints of decency at least ; and either shackle or expose their malice. Besides, captiousness, sullenness, and pouting, are most exceedingly illiberal and vulgar.

18. If you cannot command your present humour and disposition, single out those to converse with, who happen to be in the humour nearest to your own.

19. A versatility of manners is as necessary in social, as a versatility of parts is in political, life. One must often yield in order to prevail ; one must humble one's self to be exalted ; one must, like St. Paul, become all things to all men to gain some ; and (by-the-way) men are taken by the same means, *mutatis mutandis*, that women are gained ; by gentleness, insinuation, and submission : and these lines of Mr. Dryden's will hold to a minister as well as to a mistress :

The prostrate lover, when he lowest lies,
But stoops to conquer, and but kneels to rise.

In the course of the world, the qualifications of the cameleon are often necessary ; nay, they must be carried a little farther, and exerted a little sooner ; for you should, to a certain degree, take the hue of either the man or the woman that you want, and wish to be upon terms with.

20. Neglect nothing that can possibly please. A thousand

nameless little things, which nobody can describe, but which everybody feels, conspire to form that *whole* of pleasing; as the several pieces of a mosaic work, though separately of little beauty or value, when properly joined, form those beautiful figures which please everybody. A look, a gesture, an attitude, a tone of voice, all bear their parts in the great work of pleasing.

MODESTY AND ASSURANCE.

21. Nothing sinks a young man into low company, both of men and women, so surely as timidity, and diffidence of himself. If he thinks that he shall not, he may depend upon it he will not, please. But with proper endeavours to please, and a degree of persuasion that he shall, it is almost certain that he will. How many people does one meet with everywhere, who with very moderate parts, and very little knowledge, push themselves pretty far, singly by being sanguine, enterprising, and persevering? They will take no denial from man or woman; difficulties do not discourage them; repulsed twice or thrice, they rally, they charge again, and nine times in ten prevail at last.

22. Modesty is a very good quality, and which generally accompanies true merit: it engages and captivates the minds of the people; as, on the other hand, nothing is more shocking and disgusting, than presumption and impudence. We cannot like a man who is always commending and speaking well of himself, and who is the hero of his own story. On the contrary, a man who endeavours to conceal his own merit, who sets that of other people in its true light; who speaks but little of himself, and with modesty; such a man makes a favourable impression upon the understanding of his hearers, and acquires their love and esteem.

There is, however, a great difference between modesty and an awkward bashfulness, which is as ridiculous as true modesty is commendable. It is as absurd to be a simpleton, as to be an impudent fellow ; and one ought to know how to come into a room, speak to people, and answer them, without being out of countenance, or without embarrassment. The English are generally apt to be bashful ; and have not those easy, free, and at the same time polite manners, which the French have. A mean fellow, or a country bumpkin, is ashamed when he comes into good company : he appears embarrassed, does not know what to do with his hands, is disconcerted when spoken to, answers with difficulty, and almost stammers : whereas, a gentleman who is used to the world, comes into company with a graceful and proper assurance, speaks, even to people he does not know, without embarrassment, and in a natural and easy manner. This is called usage of the world, and good breeding : a most necessary and important knowledge in the intercourse of life. It frequently happens that a man with a great deal of sense, but with little usage of the world, is not so well received as one of inferior parts, but with a gentlemanlike behaviour.

23. I see no impudence, but, on the contrary, infinite utility and advantage, in presenting one's self with the same coolness and unconcern in any and every company : till one can do that, I am very sure that one can never present one's self well. Whatever is done under concern and embarrassment, must be ill-done ; and till a man is absolutely easy and unconcerned in every company, he will never be thought to have kept good, nor be very welcome in it. A steady assurance, with seeming modesty, is possibly the most useful qualification that a man can have in every part of life.

DIFFIDENCE AND INTREPIDITY.

24. People of a low, obscure education, cannot stand the rays of greatness ; they are frightened out of their wits when kings and great men speak to them ; they are awkward, ashamed, and do not know what nor how to answer : whereas *les honnêtes gens* are not dazzled by superior rank : they know and pay all the respect that is due to it ; but they do it without being disconcerted ; and can converse just as easily with a king as with any one of his subjects. That is the great advantage of being introduced young into good company, and being used early to converse with one's superiors.

25. A man who sets out in the world with real timidity and diffidence has not an equal chance in it ; he will be discouraged, put by, or trampled upon. But, to succeed, a man, especially a young one, should have inward firmness, steadiness, and intrepidity ; with exterior modesty, and *seeming diffidence*. He must modestly, but resolutely, assert his own rights and privileges. *Suaviter in modo*, but *fortiter in re*. He should have an apparent frankness and openness, but with inward caution and closeness.

26. Assurance and intrepidity, under the white banner of seeming modesty, clear the way for merit, that would otherwise be discouraged by difficulties in its journey ; whereas barefaced impudence is the noisy and blustering harbinger of a worthless and senseless usurper.

27. A cool, steady resolution should show, that where you have a right to command you will be obeyed ; but, at the same time, a gentleness in the manner of enforcing that obedience should make it a cheerful one, and soften, as

much as possible, the mortifying consciousness of inferiority. If you are to ask a favour, or even to solicit your due, you must do it *suaviter in modo*, or you will give those, who have a mind to refuse you either, a pretence to do it, by resenting the manner ; but, on the other hand, you must, by a steady perseverance and decent tenaciousness, show the *fortiter in re*.

28. The greatest favours may be done so awkwardly and bunglingly as to offend ; and disagreeable things may be done so agreeably as almost to oblige. Endeavour to acquire this great secret ; it exists, it is to be found, and is worth a great deal more than the grand secret of the alchemists would be if it were, as it is not, to be found.

IL FAUT DU MONDE.

29. Make yourself absolute master of your temper, and your countenance, so far, at least, as that no visible change do appear in either, whatever you may feel inwardly. This may be difficult, but it is by no means impossible ; and, as a man of sense never attempts impossibilities on one hand, on the other he is never discouraged by difficulties : on the contrary, he redoubles his industry and his diligence, he perseveres and infallibly prevails at last. In any point, which prudence bids you pursue, and which a manifest utility attends, let difficulties only animate your industry, not deter you from the pursuit. If one way has failed, try another ; be active, persevere, and you will conquer.

30. Strong minds have undoubtedly an ascendant over weak ones. But the ascendant is to be gained by degrees, and by those arts only which experience and the knowledge of the world teaches : for few are mean enough to be bullied,

though most are weak enough to be bubbled. I have often seen people of superior governed by people of much inferior parts, without knowing or even suspecting that they were so governed. This can only happen, when those people of inferior parts have more worldly dexterity and experience than those they govern. They see the weak and unguarded part, and apply to it : they take it, and all the rest follows. Would you gain either men or women, and every man of sense desires to gain both, *il faut du monde*.

31. A learned parson, rusting in his cell at Oxford or Cambridge, will reason admirably well upon the nature of man ; will profoundly analyze the head, the heart, the reason, the will, the passions, the senses, the sentiments, and all those subdivisions of we know not what ; and yet, unfortunately, he knows nothing of man : for he hath not lived with him ; and is ignorant of all the various modes, habits, prejudices, and tastes, that always influence, and often determine him. He views man as he does colours in Sir Isaac Newton's prism, where only the capital ones are seen ; but an experienced dyer knows all their various shades and gradations, together with the result of their several mixtures. Few men are of one plain, decided colour ; most are mixed, shaded, and blended ; and vary as much, from different situations, as changeable silks do from different lights. The man *qui a du monde* knows all this from his own experience and observation : the conceited, cloistered philosopher knows nothing of it from his own theory ; his practice is absurd and improper ; and he acts as awkwardly as a man would dance, who had never seen others dance, nor learned of a dancing-master ; but who had only studied the notes by which dances are now pricked down, as well as tunes.

THE FORCE OF APPEARANCES.

32. People in general take characters, as they do most things, upon trust, rather than be at the trouble of examining them themselves ; and the decisions of four or five fashionable people, in every place, are final, more particularly with regard to characters, which all can hear, and but few judge of.

33. Mankind, as I have often told you, is more governed by appearances than by realities ; and, with regard to opinion, one had better be really rough and hard, with the appearances of gentleness and softness, than just the reverse. Few people have penetration enough to discover, attention enough to observe, or even concern enough to examine, beyond the exterior ; they take their notions from the surface, and go no deeper ; they commend as the gentlest and best natured man in the world, that man who has the most engaging exterior manner, though possibly they have been but once in his company. An air, a tone of voice, a composure of countenance to mildness and softness, which are all easily acquired, do the business ; and without further examination, and possibly with the contrary qualities, that man is reckoned the gentlest, the modestest, and the best natured man alive. Happy the man who, with a certain fund of parts and knowledge, gets acquainted with the world early enough to make it his bubble, at an age when most people are the bubbles of the world ! for that is the common case of youth. They grow wiser when it is too late, and, ashamed and vexed at having been bubbles so long, too often turn knaves at last. Do not, therefore, trust to appearances and outside yourself, but pay other people with them ; because you may be sure that nine in ten of mankind do,

and ever will, trust to them. This is by no means a criminal or blameable simulation, if not used with an ill intention. I am by no means blameable in desiring to have other people's good word, good will, and affection, if I do not mean to abuse them.

34. Take it for granted, that by far the greatest part of mankind do neither analyze nor search to the bottom ; they are incapable of penetrating deeper than the surface. All have senses to be gratified, very few have reason to be applied to. Graceful utterance and action please their eyes, elegant diction tickles their ears ; but strong reason would be thrown away upon them.

35. The world judges from the appearances of things, and not from the reality, which few are able, and still fewer are inclined, to fathom.

USE YOUR OWN REASON.

36. I would have you see everything with your own eyes, and hear everything with your own ears : for I know by very long experience that it is very unsafe to trust to other people's. Vanity and interest cause many misrepresentations, and folly causes many more. Few people have parts enough to relate exactly and judiciously ; and those who have, for some reason or other, never fail to sink or to add some circumstance.

37. Let it be your maxim through life, to know all you can know, yourself ; and never to trust implicitly to the information of others. Read men yourself, not in books, but in nature. Adopt no systems, but study them yourself. Observe their weaknesses, their passions, their humours, of all which their understandings are, nine times in ten, the dupes. You will then know that they are to be gained, in-

fluenced, or led, much oftener by little things than by great ones ; and, consequently, you will no longer think those things little which tend to such great purposes.

38. Examine carefully, and reconsider all your notions of things ; analyse them, and discover their component parts, and see if habit and prejudice are not the principal ones ; weigh the matter, upon which you are to form your opinion, in the equal and impartial scales of reason. It is not to be conceived how many people capable of reasoning, if they would, live and die in a thousand errors, from laziness ; they will rather adopt the prejudices of others, than give themselves the trouble of forming opinions of their own. They say things, at first, because other people have said them, and then they persist in them, because they have said them themselves.

39. Use and assert your own reason ; reflect, examine, and analyse everything, in order to form a sound and mature judgment ; let no οὐτος ἐφη impose upon your understanding, mislead your actions, or dictate your conversation. Be early what, if you are not, you will, when too late, wish you had been. Consult your reason betimes : I do not say that it will always prove an unerring guide, for human reason is not infallible ; but it will prove the least erring guide that you can follow. Books and conversation may assist it, but adopt neither blindly and implicitly ; try both by that best rule, which God has given to direct us, reason. Of all the troubles, do not decline, as many people do, that of thinking. The herd of mankind can hardly be said to think ; their notions are almost all adoptive ; and, in general, I believe it is better that it should be so, as such common prejudices contribute more to order and quiet, than their own separate reasonings would do, uncultivated and unimproved as they are.

40. Never implicitly adopt a character upon common fame ; which, though generally right as to the great outlines of characters, is always wrong in some particulars.

TAKE NOTHING ON TRUST.

41. All you learn, and all you can read, will be of little use, if you do not think and reason upon it yourself. One reads to know other people's thoughts ; but if we take them upon trust, without examining and comparing them with our own, it is really living upon other people's scraps, or retailing other people's goods. To know the thoughts of others is of use, because it suggests thoughts to one's self, and helps one to form a judgment ; but to repeat other people's thoughts, without considering whether they are right or wrong, is the talent only of a parrot, or at most a player.

42. In short, use yourself to think and reflect upon everything you hear and see : examine everything, and see whether it is true or not, without taking it upon trust.

43. In order to judge of the inside of others, study your own ; for men in general are very much alike ; and though one has one prevailing passion, and another has another, yet their operations are much the same ; and whatever engages or disgusts, pleases or offends you, in others, will, *mutatis mutandis*, engage, disgust, please, or offend others, in you. Observe, with the utmost attention, all the operations of your own mind, the nature of your passions, and the various motives that determine your will ; and you may, in a great degree, know all mankind.

44. Learning is acquired by reading books ; but the

much more necessary learning, the knowledge of the world, is only to be acquired by reading men, and studying all the various editions of them. Many words in every language are generally thought to be synonymous ; but those who study the language attentively will find that there is no such thing ; they will discover some little difference, some distinction, between all those words that are vulgarly called synonymous ; one hath always more energy, extent, or delicacy, than another : it is the same with men ; all are in general, and yet no two in particular, exactly alike. Those who have not accurately studied perpetually mistake them : they do not discern the shades and gradations that distinguish characters seemingly alike. Company, various company, is the only school for this knowledge.

Learning and Knowledge.



KNOWLEDGE.

45. Knowledge is a comfortable and necessary retreat and shelter for us in an advanced age ; and if we do not plant it while young, it will give us no shade when we grow old.

46. Observe the difference there is between minds cultivated and minds uncultivated, and you will, I am sure, think that you cannot take too much pains, nor employ too much of your time in the culture of your own. A drayman is probably born with as good organs as Milton, Locke, or Newton ; but by culture they are much more above him than he is above his horse. Sometimes, indeed, extraordinary geniuses have broken out by the force of nature without the assistance of education ; but those instances are too rare for anybody to trust to ; and even they would make a much greater figure if they had the advantage of education into the bargain.

✓ 47. No quickness of parts, no vivacity, will do long or go far, without a solid fund of knowledge : and that fund of

knowledge will amply repay all the pains that you can take in acquiring it.

48. The ignorant and the weak only are idle ; but those who have once acquired a good stock of knowledge, always desire to increase it. Knowledge is like power in this respect ; that those who have the most, are most desirous of having more. It does not clog by possession, but increases desire, which is the case of very few pleasures.

49. It is the characteristic of a man of parts and good judgment, to know, and give that degree of attention, that each object deserves. Whereas little minds mistake little objects for great ones, and lavish away upon the former that time and attention which only the latter deserve. To such mistakes we owe the numerous and frivolous tribe of insect-mongers, shellmongers, and pursuers and driers of butterflies, &c. The strong mind distinguishes, not only between the useful and the useless, but likewise between the useful and the curious. He applies himself intensely to the former ; he only amuses himself with the latter.

50. For time is precious, life short, and consequently one must not lose a single moment. A man of sense knows how to make the most of time, and puts out his whole sum, either to interest or to pleasure ; he is never idle, but constantly employed either in amusements or in study. It is a saying, that idleness is the mother of all vice. At least, it is certain that laziness is the inheritance of fools ; and nothing so despicable as a sluggard.

51. Reputation, like health, is preserved and increased by the same means by which it is acquired. Continue to desire and deserve praise, and you will certainly find it : knowledge, adorned by manners, will infallibly procure it.

LEARNING.

52. Lay aside the best book whenever you can go into the best company ; and depend upon it you change for the better. However, as the most tumultuous life, whether of business or pleasure, leaves some vacant moments every day, in which a book is the refuge of a rational being, I mean now to point out to you the method of employing those moments (which will and ought to be but few) in the most advantageous manner. Throw away none of your time upon those trivial futile books, published by idle or necessitous authors, for the amusement of idle and ignorant readers : such sort of books swarm and buzz about one every day ; flap them away, they have no sting. *Certum pete finem*, have some one object for those leisure moments, and pursue that object invariably till you have attained it ; and then take some other.

53. But remember that manners must adorn knowledge and smooth its way through the world. Like a great rough diamond, it may do very well in a closet, by way of curiosity, and also for its intrinsic value ; but it will never be worn, nor shine, if it is not polished.

54. The deepest learning without good breeding is unwelcome and tiresome pedantry, and of use nowhere but in a man's own closet, and consequently of little use at all.

55. If you would avoid the accusation of pedantry, on one hand, or the suspicion of ignorance on the other, abstain from learned ostentation. Speak the language of the company that you are in ; speak it purely, and unlarded with any other. Never seem wiser, nor more learned, than

the people you are with. Wear your learning, like your watch, in a private pocket ; and do not pull it out, and strike it, merely to show that you have one. If you are asked what o'clock it is, tell it ; but do not proclaim it hourly and unasked, like the watchman.

Business.



APPLICATION.

56. The sure way to excel in anything is only to have a close and undissipated attention while you are about it, and then you need not be half the time that otherwise you must be.

57. Many people lose a great deal of their time by laziness ; they loll and yawn in a great chair, tell themselves that they have not time to begin anything then, and that it will do as well another time. This is a most unfortunate disposition, and the greatest obstruction to both knowledge and business.

58. I look upon indolence as a sort of *suicide* ; for the man is effectually destroyed, though the appetites of the brute may survive. Business by no means forbids pleasures ; on the contrary, they reciprocally season each other ; and I will venture to affirm, that no man enjoys either in perfection that does not join both. They whet the desire for each other. Use yourself therefore, in time, to be alert and diligent in your little concerns : never procrastinate, never put off till to-morrow what you can do to-day ; and never

do two things at a time ; pursue your object, be it what it will, steadily and indefatigably ; and let any difficulties (if surmountable) rather animate than slacken your endeavours. Perseverance has surprising effects.

59. The value of moments, when cast up, is immense, if well employed ; if thrown away, their loss is irrecoverable. Every moment may be put to some use, and that with much more pleasure than if unemployed. Do not imagine that, by the employment of time, I mean an uninterrupted application to serious studies. No ; pleasures are, at proper times, both as necessary and as useful : they fashion and form you for the world ; they teach you characters, and show you the human heart in its unguarded minutes. But, then, remember to make that use of them. I have known many people, from laziness of mind, go through both pleasure and business with equal inattention ; neither enjoying the one nor doing the other ; thinking themselves men of pleasure, because they were mingled with those who were ; and men of business, because they had business to do, though they did not do it. Whatever you do, do it to the purpose ; do it thoroughly, not superficially. *Approfondissez* ; go to the bottom of things. Anything half done, or half known, is, in my mind, neither done nor known at all. Nay worse, for it often misleads. There is hardly any place, or any company, where you may not gain knowledge if you please ; almost everybody knows some one thing, and is glad to talk upon that one thing. Seek and you will find, in this world as well as in the next. See everything, inquire into everything ; and you may excuse your curiosity, and the questions you ask, which otherwise might be thought impertinent, by your manner of asking them ; for most things depend a great deal upon the manner. As, for example,

I am afraid that I am very troublesome with my questions, but nobody can inform me so well as you ; or something of that kind.

PERSEVERANCE AND METHOD.

60. Business must not be sauntered and trifled with ; and you must not say to it, as Felix did to Paul, ‘at a more convenient season I will speak to thee.’ The most convenient season for business is the first ; but study and business, in some measure, point out their own times to a man of sense ; time is much oftener squandered away in the wrong choice and improper methods of amusement and pleasures.

Many people think that they are in pleasures provided they are neither in study nor in business. Nothing like it ; they are doing nothing, and might just as well be asleep. They contract habitudes from laziness, and they only frequent those places where they are free from all restraints and attentions. Be upon your guard against this idle profusion of time : and let every place you go to be either the scene of quick and lively pleasures, or the school of your improvements : let every company you go into, either gratify your senses, extend your knowledge, or refine your manners.

61. Despatch is the soul of business ; and nothing contributes more to despatch than method. Lay down a method for everything, and stick to it inviolably, as far as unexpected incidents may allow. Fix one certain hour and day in the week for your accompts, and keep them together in their proper order ; by which means they will require very little time, and you can never be much cheated. Whatever letters and papers you keep, docket and tie them up in their respective classes, so that you may instantly have

recourse to any one. Lay down a method also for your reading, for which you allot a certain share of your mornings ; let it be in a consistent and consecutive course, and not in that desultory and immethodical manner in which many people read scraps of different authors upon different subjects. Keep a useful and short common-place book of what you read, to help your memory only, and not for pedantic quotations. Never read history without having maps, and a chronological book, or tables, lying by you, and constantly recurred to ; without which, history is only a confused heap of facts. One method more I recommend to you, by which I have found great benefit, that is, to rise early, and at the same hour every morning, how late soever you may have sat up the night before. This secures you an hour or two, at least, of reading or reflection, before the common interruptions of the morning begin ; and it will save your constitution, by forcing you to go to bed early, at least one night in three.

62. In business (talent supposed) nothing is more effectual, or successful, than a good, though concealed, opinion of one's self, a firm resolution, and an unwearied perseverance. None but madmen attempt impossibilities ; and whatever is possible is one way or another to be brought about. If one method fails, try another, and suit your methods to the characters you have to do with.

QUALITIES REQUIRED IN BUSINESS.

63. There are some qualifications necessary in the practical part of business, which may deserve some consideration in your leisure moments : such as an absolute command of

your temper, so as not to be provoked to passion upon any account : patience to hear frivolous, impertinent, and unreasonable applications ; with address enough to refuse without offending, or by your manner of granting to double the obligation : dexterity enough to conceal a truth without telling a lie : sagacity enough to read other people's countenances : and serenity enough not to let them discover anything by yours ; a seeming frankness, with a real reserve. These are the rudiments of a politician ; the world must be your grammar.

64. Business requires no conjuration nor supernatural talents, as people unacquainted with it are apt to think. Method, diligence, and discretion will carry a man of good strong common sense much higher than the finest parts without them can do. *Par negotiis, neque supra*, is the true character of a man of business : but then it implies ready attention, and no *absences* ; and a flexibility and versatility of attention from one object to another, without being engrossed by any one.

65. Steady and undissipated attention to one object is a sure mark of a superior genius ; as hurry, bustle, and agitation, are the never-failing symptoms of a weak and frivolous mind.

66. Many young people are so light, so dissipated, and so incurious, that they can hardly be said to see what they see or hear what they hear ; that is, they hear in so superficial and inattentive a manner, that they might as well not see or hear at all.

67. Ask questions, and many questions ; and leave nothing till you are thoroughly informed of it. Such pertinent questions are far from being ill-bred, or troublesome to those of whom you ask them ; on the contrary, they are

a tacit compliment to their knowledge ; and people have a better opinion of a young man, when they see him desirous to be informed.

DESPATCH AND HURRY.

68. Be upon your guard against the pedantry and affectation of business, which young people are apt to fall into from the pride of being concerned in it young. They look thoughtful, complain of the weight of business, throw out mysterious hints, and seem big with secrets which they do not know. Do you, on the contrary, never talk of business but to those with whom you are to transact it ; and learn to seem *vacuus* and idle when you have the most business. Of all things the *volto sciolto*, and the *pensieri stretti*, are necessary.

69. Whoever is in a hurry shows that the thing he is about is too big for him. Haste and hurry are very different things.

70. A man of sense may be in haste, but can never be in a hurry, because he knows that whatever he does in a hurry he must necessarily do very ill. He may be in haste to despatch an affair, but he will take care not to let that haste hinder his doing it well. Little minds are in a hurry when the object proves (as it commonly does) too big for them ; they run, they hare, they puzzle, confound, and perplex themselves ; they want to do everything at once, and never do it at all. But a man of sense takes the time necessary for doing the thing he is about well ; and his haste to despatch a business only appears by the continuity of his application to it : he pursues it with a cool steadiness, and finishes it before he begins any other.

71. Aim, at least, at the perfection of everything that is worth doing at all, and you will come nearer it than you would imagine ; but those always crawl infinitely short of it whose aim is only mediocrity.

BUSINESS LETTERS.

72. It is of the greatest importance to write letters well, as this is a talent which unavoidably occurs every day of one's life, as well in business as in pleasure ; and inaccuracies in orthography, or in style, are never pardoned but in ladies.

73. The first thing necessary in writing letters of business is extreme clearness and perspicuity ; every paragraph should be so clear and unambiguous, that the dullest fellow in the world may not be able to mistake it, nor obliged to read it twice in order to understand it. This necessary clearness implies a correctness, without excluding an elegance of style. Tropes, figures, antitheses, epigrams, &c., would be as misplaced, and as impertinent, in letters of business as they are sometimes (if judiciously used) proper and pleasing in familiar letters, upon common and trite subjects. In business, an elegant simplicity, the result of care, not of labour, is required. Business must be well, not affectedly, dressed, but by no means negligently. Let your first attention be to clearness, and read every paragraph after you have written it, in the critical view of discovering whether it is possible that any one man can mistake the true sense of it ; and correct it accordingly.

Our pronouns and relatives often create obscurity or ambiguity ; be therefore exceedingly attentive to them, and

take care to mark out with precision their particular relations. For example ; Mr. Johnson acquainted me, that he had seen Mr. Smith, who had promised him to speak to Mr. Clarke, to return him (Mr. Johnson) those papers which he (Mr. Smith) had left some time ago with him (Mr. Clarke) : it is better to repeat a name, though unnecessarily, ten times, than to have the person mistaken once. *Who*, you know, is singly relative to persons, and cannot be applied to things ; *which*, and *that*, are chiefly relative to things, but not absolutely exclusive of persons ; for one may say, the man *that* robbed or killed such-a-one ; but it is much better to say, the man *who* robbed or killed. One never says, the man or the woman *which*. *Which* and *that*, though chiefly relative to things, cannot be always used indifferently as to things ; and the *εὐφωνία* must sometimes determine their place. For instance : 'The letter *which* I received from you, *which* you referred to in your last, *which* came by Lord Albemarle's messenger, and *which* I showed to such-a-one ; I would change it thus—'The letter *that* I received from you, *which* you referred to in your last, *that* came by Lord Albemarle's messenger, and *which* I showed to such-a-one.

Absence of Mind.



INATTENTION UNPARDONABLE.

74. No man is, in any degree, fit for either business or conversation, who cannot, and does not, direct and command his attention to the present object, be that what it will.

75. People very often, to excuse themselves, very unjustly accuse their constitutions. Care and reflection, if properly used, will get the better ; and a man may as surely get a habit of letting his reason prevail over his constitution as of letting, as most people do, the latter prevail over the former. I know no one thing more offensive to a company than that inattention and *distraction*. It is showing them the utmost contempt, and people never forget contempt. No man is *distract*ed with the man he fears, or the woman he loves ; which is a proof that every man can get the better of that *distraction* when he thinks it worth his while to do so ; and, take my word for it, it is always worth his while. For my own part, I would rather be in company with a dead man than with an absent one ; for if the dead

man gives me no pleasure, at least he shows me no contempt ; whereas the absent man, silently indeed, but very plainly, tells me that he does not think me worth his attention.

76. A man is fit for neither business nor pleasure who either cannot, or does not, command and direct his attention to the present object, and in some degree banish, for that time, all other objects from his thoughts. If at a ball, a supper, or a party of pleasure, a man were to be solving, in his own mind, a problem in Euclid, he would be a very bad companion, and make a very poor figure in that company ; or if, in studying a problem in his closet, he were to think of a minuet, I am apt to believe that he would make a very poor mathematician. There is time enough for everything in the course of the day, if you do but one thing at once ; but there is not time enough in the year, if you will do two things at a time.

77. An absent man can make but few observations ; and those will be disjointed and imperfect ones, as half the circumstances must necessarily escape him. He can pursue nothing steadily, because his absences make him lose his way. They are very disagreeable, and hardly to be tolerated in old age ; but in youth they cannot be forgiven.

78. There is nothing so brutally shocking, nor so little forgiven, as a seeming inattention to the person who is speaking to you ; and I have known many a man knocked down, for (in my opinion) a much slighter provocation, than that shocking inattention which I mean. I have seen many people, who while you are speaking to them, instead of looking at, and attending to you, fix their eyes upon the ceiling, or some other part of the room, look out of the window, play with a dog, twirl their snuff-box, or pick their

nose. Nothing discovers a little, futile, frivolous mind more than this, and nothing is so offensively ill-bred : it is an explicit declaration on your part, that every, the most trifling object, deserves your attention more than all that can be said by the person who is speaking to you.

ATTEND TO WHAT YOU ARE DOING.

79. Be as attentive to your pleasures as to your studies. In the latter, observe and reflect upon all you read ; and in the former, be watchful and attentive to all that you see and hear ; and never have it to say, as a thousand fools do, of things that were said and done before their faces, that, truly, they did not mind them because they were thinking of something else. Why were they thinking of something else ? and, if they were, why did they come there ? The truth is, that the fools were thinking of nothing. Remember the *hoc age* : do what you are about, be that what it will ; it is either worth doing well, or not at all. Wherever you are, have (as the low, vulgar expression is) your ears and your eyes about you. Listen to everything that is said, and see everything that is done. Observe the looks and countenances of those who speak, which is often a surer way of discovering the truth, than from what they say. But then keep all these observations to yourself, for your own private use, and rarely communicate them to others.

80. It is a sure sign of a little mind, to be doing one thing, and at the same time to be either thinking of another, or not thinking at all.

81. Laziness of mind, or inattention, are as great enemies to knowledge as incapacity ; for, in truth, what difference is

there between a man who will not, and a man who cannot be informed? This difference only, that the former is justly to be blamed, and the latter to be pitied. And yet how many are there, very capable of receiving knowledge, who from laziness, inattention, and incuriousness, will not so much as ask for it, much less take the least pains to acquire it.

82. There is no surer sign in the world of a little, weak mind, than inattention. Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well; and nothing can be done well without attention. It is the sure answer of a fool, when you ask him about anything that was said or done where he was present, that, 'truly he did not mind it.' And why did not the fool mind it? What had he else to do there, but to mind what was doing? A man of sense sees, hears, and retains everything that passes where he is.

83. Mind, not only what people say, but how they say it; and, if you have any sagacity, you may discover more truth by your eyes than by your ears. People can say what they will, but they cannot look just as they will; and their looks frequently discover what their words are calculated to conceal. Observe, therefore, people's looks carefully, when they speak, not only to you, but to each other.

Eloquence and Style.



THE ART OF SPEAKING WELL.

84. The talent of speaking well is more essentially necessary than any other, to make us both agreeable and considerable.

85. Oratory with all its graces, that of enunciation in particular, is full as necessary in our government as it ever was in Greece or Rome. No man can make a fortune or a figure in this country, without speaking, and speaking well, in public. If you will persuade, you must first please ; and if you will please, you must tune your voice to harmony ; you must articulate every syllable distinctly ; your emphasis and cadences must be strongly and properly marked ; and the whole together must be graceful and engaging ; if you do not speak in that manner, you had much better not speak at all. All the learning you have, or ever can have, is not worth one groat without it. It may be a comfort and an amusement to you in your closet, but can be of no use to you in the world.

86. The nature of our constitution makes eloquence

more useful and more necessary in this country than in any other in Europe. A certain degree of good sense and knowledge is requisite for that, as well as for everything else ; but beyond that, the purity of diction, the elegance of style, the harmony of periods, a pleasing elocution, and a graceful action, are the things which a public speaker should attend to the most ; because his audience certainly does, and understands them the best ; or rather indeed understands little else.

87. I am not only persuaded by theory, but convinced by my experience, that (supposing a certain degree of common sense) what is called a good speaker is as much a mechanic as a good shoemaker ; and that the two trades are equally to be learned by the same degree of application.

88. Every man, if he pleases, may choose good words instead of bad ones, may speak properly instead of improperly, may be clear and perspicuous in his recitals, instead of dark and muddy ; he may have grace instead of awkwardness in his motions and gestures ; and, in short, may be a very agreeable, instead of a very disagreeable, speaker, if he will take care and pains. And surely it is very well worth while to take a great deal of pains to excel other men in that particular article in which they excel beasts.

89. Style is the dress of thoughts, and a well-dressed thought, like a well-dressed man, appears to great advantage.

90. Think of your words, and of their arrangement, before you speak ; choose the most elegant, and place them in the best order. Consult your own ear to avoid cacophony, and what is very near as bad, monotony. Think also of your gesture and looks, when you are speaking even upon the most trifling subjects. The same things differently expressed, looked, and delivered, cease to be the same things.

THE ARTS OF PERSUASION.

91. If you would please, persuade, and prevail in speaking, it must be by the ornamental parts of oratory. Make them, therefore, habitual to you, and resolve never to say the most common things, even to your footman, but in the best words you can find, and with the best utterance.

92. Every numerous assembly is *mob*, let the individuals who compose it be what they will. Mere reason and good sense is never to be talked to a mob : their passions, their sentiments, their senses, and their seeming interests, are alone to be applied to. Understanding they have collectively none ; but they have ears and eyes, which must be flattered and seduced ; and this can only be done by eloquence, tuneful periods, graceful action, and all the various parts of oratory.

93. The elegance of the style, and the turn of the periods, make the chief impression upon the hearers. Give them but one or two round and harmonious periods in a speech, which they will retain and repeat, and they will go home as well satisfied as people do from an Opera, humming all the way one or two favourite tunes that have struck their ears and were easily caught. Most people have ears, but few have judgment ; tickle those ears, and depend upon it you will catch their judgments, such as they are.

94. You cannot but be convinced, that a man who speaks and writes with elegance and grace, who makes choice of good words, and adorns and embellishes the subject upon which he either speaks or writes, will persuade better, and succeed more easily in obtaining what he wishes, than a

man who does not explain himself clearly, speaks his language ill, or makes use of low and vulgar expressions, and who has neither grace nor elegance in anything that he says.

95. An agreeable and distinct manner of speaking adds greatly to the matter ; and I have known many a very good speech unregarded upon account of the disagreeable manner in which it has been delivered, and many an indifferent one applauded for the contrary reason.

96. Men, as well as women, are much oftener led by their hearts than by their understandings. The way to the heart is through the senses ; please their eyes and their ears, and the work is half done. I have frequently known a man's fortune decided for ever by his first address. If it is pleasing, people are hurried involuntarily into a persuasion that he has a merit, which possibly he has not ; as, on the other hand, if it is ungraceful, they are immediately prejudiced against him ; and unwilling to allow him the merit which it may be he has. Nor is this sentiment so unjust and unreasonable as at first it may seem ; for if a man has parts he must know of what infinite consequence it is to him to have a graceful manner of speaking and a genteel and pleasing address : he will cultivate and improve them to the utmost.

ELOCUTION.

97. If you have the least defect in your elocution, take the utmost care and pains to correct it.

98. The voice and manner of speaking are not to be neglected : some people almost shut their mouths when they speak, and mutter so that they are not to be understood ; others speak so fast, and sputter, that they are not to be understood neither ; some always speak as loud as if

they were talking to deaf people ; and others so low that one cannot hear them.

99. All these habits are awkward and disagreeable, and are to be avoided by attention ; they are the distinguishing marks of the ordinary people, who have had no care taken of their education.

100. Do not neglect your style, whatever language you speak in, or whomever you speak to, were it your footman. Seek always for the best words and the happiest expressions you can find. Do not content yourself with being barely understood ; but adorn your thoughts, and dress them as you would your person.

101. Words, which are the dress of thoughts, deserve, surely, more care than clothes, which are only the dress of the person, and which, however, ought to have their share of attention.

102. The first thing you should attend to is, to speak whatever language you do speak in its greatest purity, and according to the rules of grammar ; for we must never offend against grammar, nor make use of words which are not really words. This is not all, for not to speak ill is not sufficient ; we must speak well, and the best method of attaining to that, is to read the best authors with attention ; and to observe how people of fashion speak, and those who express themselves best ; for shopkeepers, common people, footmen, and maid-servants, all speak ill.

103. A vulgar ordinary way of thinking, acting, or speaking, implies a low education and a habit of low company. Young people contract it at school, or among servants with whom they are too often used to converse ; but, after they frequent good company, they must want attention and observation very much if they do not lay it quite aside.

ELEGANCE OF STYLE.

104. Attend minutely to your style, whatever language you speak or write in ; seek for the best words, and think of the best turns. Whenever you doubt of the propriety or elegance of any word, search the dictionary, or some good author, for it, or inquire of somebody who is master of that language ; and in a little time propriety and elegance of diction will become so habitual to you, that they will cost you no more trouble.

105. I wish you would use yourself to translate, every day, only three or four lines, from any book, in any language, into the correctest and most elegant English that you can think of ; you cannot imagine how it will insensibly form your style, and give you an habitual elegance ; it would not take you up a quarter of an hour in a day.

106. Solidity and delicacy of thought must be given us, it cannot be acquired, though it may be improved ; but elegance and delicacy of expression may be acquired by whoever will take the necessary care and pains.

107. Tune your tongue early to persuasion, and let no jarring, dissonant accents ever fall from it. Contract a habit of speaking well, upon every occasion, and neglect yourself in no one. Eloquence and good breeding, alone, with an exceeding small degree of parts and knowledge, will carry a man a great way.

108. In business, a great deal may depend upon the force and extent of one word ; and in conversation, a moderate thought may gain, or a good one lose, by the

propriety or impropriety, the elegance or inelegancy, of one single word.

109. In conversation, even trifles, elegantly expressed, well looked, and accompanied with graceful action, will ever please beyond all the homespun, unadorned sense in the world. Reflect, on one side, how you feel within yourself while you are forced to suffer the tedious, muddy, and ill-turned narration of some awkward fellow, even though the fact may be interesting ; and, on the other hand, with what pleasure you attend to the relation of a much less interesting matter, when elegantly expressed, genteelly turned, and gracefully delivered.

110. We are so made, we love to be pleased better than to be informed ; information is, in a certain degree, mortifying, as it implies our previous ignorance ; it must be sweetened to be palatable.

Conversation.



SUBJECTS OF CONVERSATION.

111. Almost every subject in the world has its proper time and place ; in which no one is above or below discussion. The point is, to talk well upon the subject you talk upon ; and the most trifling, frivolous subjects will still give a man of parts an opportunity of showing them.

112. It is well to be able to talk, with some degree of knowledge, upon all those subjects that other people talk sometimes upon.

113. It is a great advantage for any man to be able to talk or to hear, neither ignorantly nor absurdly, upon any subject ; for I have known people, who have not said one word, hear ignorantly and absurdly ; it has appeared in their inattentive and unmeaning faces.

114. There is a certain light table chitchat, useful to keep off improper and too serious subjects, which is only to be learned in the pleasures of good company. In truth, it may be trifling ; but, trifling as it is, a man of parts, and experience of the world, will give an agreeable turn to it. *L'art de badiner agréablement* is by no means to be despised.

115. If you will put conversation to profit, great knowledge may be gained by it ; and is it not better (since it is full as easy) to turn it upon useful than upon useless subjects ?

116. Whatever you say, if you say it with a supercilious, cynical face, or an embarrassed countenance, or a silly disconcerted grin, will be ill received. If into the bargain you mutter it, or utter it indistinctly and ungracefully, it will be still worse received. If your air and address are vulgar and awkward you may be esteemed indeed, if you have great intrinsic merit, but you will never please ; and without pleasing you will rise but heavily.

DO NOT BE LONG-WINDED.

117. Never hold anybody by the button, or the hand, in order to be heard out ; for, if people are not willing to hear you, you had much better hold your tongue than them.

118. Most long talkers single out some one unfortunate man in company (commonly him whom they observe to be the most silent, or their next neighbour), to whisper, or at least, in a half voice, to convey a continuity of words to. This is excessively ill-bred, and, in some degree, a fraud ; conversation stock being a joint and common property. But, on the other hand, if one of these unmerciful talkers lays hold of you, hear him with patience (and at least seeming attention), if he is worth obliging ; for nothing will oblige him more than a patient hearing, as nothing would hurt him more than either to leave him in the midst of his discourse, or to discover your impatience under your affliction.

119. Take, rather than give, the tone of the company you are in. If you have parts, you will show them, more or

less, upon every subject ; and if you have not, you had better talk sillily upon a subject of other people's than of your own choosing.

120. People always talk best upon what they know most, and it is both pleasing them, and improving one's self, to put them upon that subject.

121. Above all things, and upon all occasions, avoid speaking of yourself, if it be possible. Such is the natural pride and vanity of our hearts, that it perpetually breaks out, even in people of the best parts, in all the various modes and figures of the egotism.

122. Some abruptly speak advantageously of themselves, without either pretence or provocation. They are impudent. Others proceed more artfully, as they imagine ; and forge accusations against themselves, complain of calumnies which they never heard, in order to justify themselves by exhibiting a catalogue of their many virtues.

123. This thin veil of modesty drawn before vanity is much too transparent to conceal it even from very moderate discernment.

AVOID EGOTISM.

124. Others go more modestly and sllily still (as they think) to work ; but in my mind still more ridiculously. They confess themselves (not without some degree of shame and confusion) into all the cardinal virtues, by first degrading them into weaknesses, and then owning their misfortune in being made up of those weaknesses.

125. This principle of vanity and pride is so strong in human nature that it descends even to the lowest objects ; and one often sees people angling for praise, where, admitting

all they say to be true (which by the way it seldom is), no just praise is to be caught.

126. The only sure way of avoiding these evils is, never to speak of yourself at all. But when historically you are obliged to mention yourself, take care not to drop one single word which can directly or indirectly be construed as fishing for applause.

127. Be your character what it will, it will be known ; and nobody will take it upon your own word. Never imagine that anything you can say yourself will varnish your defects or add lustre to your perfections : but, on the contrary, it may, and nine times in ten will, make the former more glaring, and the latter obscure. If you are silent upon your own subject, neither envy, indignation, nor ridicule will obstruct or allay the applause which you may really deserve ; but if you publish your own panegyrics, upon any occasion or in any shape whatsoever, and however artfully dressed or disguised, they will all conspire against you, and you will be disappointed of the very end you aim at.

BE DISCREET.

128. Cautiously avoid talking of either your own or other people's domestic affairs. Yours are nothing to them, but tedious ; theirs are nothing to you. The subject is a tender one ; and it is odds but you touch somebody or other's sore place : for, in this case, there is no trusting to specious appearances ; which may be, and often are, so contrary to the real situations of things, between men and their wives, parents and their children, seeming friends, &c., that, with the best intentions in the world, one often blunders disagreeably.

129. Remember, that the wit, humour, and jokes of most mixed companies are local. They thrive in that particular soil, but will not often bear transplanting. Every company is differently circumstanced, has its particular cant and jargon ; which may give occasion to wit and mirth within that circle, but would seem flat and insipid in any other, and therefore will not bear repeating. Nothing makes a man look sillier than a pleasantry not relished or not understood ; and if he meets with a profound silence when he expected a general applause, or, what is worse, if he is desired to explain the *bon mot*, his awkward and embarrassed situation is easier imagined than described. *Apropos* of repeating ; take great care never to repeat (I do not mean here the pleasantries) in one company what you hear in another. Things seemingly indifferent may, by circulation, have much graver consequences than you would imagine. Besides, there is a general tacit trust in conversation, by which a man is obliged not to report anything out of it, though he is not immediately enjoined secrecy. A retailer of this kind is sure to draw himself into a thousand scrapes and discussions, and to be shyly and uncomfortably received, wherever he goes.

130. Finish every argument or dispute with some little good humoured pleasantry, to show that you are neither hurt yourself, nor meant to hurt your antagonist, for an argument kept up a good while often occasions a temporary alienation on each side.

131. There is an awkwardness of the mind, that ought to be, and with care may be, avoided : as, for instance, to mistake or forget names ; to speak of Mr. What-d'ye-call him, or Mrs. Thingum, or How-d'ye-call-her, is excessively awkward and ordinary. To call people by improper titles

and appellations is so too ; as my Lord, for Sir ; and Sir, for my Lord. To begin a story or narration, when you are not perfect in it, and cannot go through with it, but are forced, possibly, to say in the middle of it, 'I have forgot the rest,' is very unpleasant and bungling. One must be extremely exact, clear, and perspicuous in everything one says, otherwise, instead of entertaining or informing others, one only tires and puzzles them.

132. Tell stories very seldom, and absolutely never but where they are very apt and very short. Omit every circumstance that is not material, and beware of digressions. To have frequent recourse to narrative betrays great want of imagination.

133. Of all things, banish egotism out of your conversation, and never think of entertaining people with your own personal concerns or private affairs ; though they are interesting to you, they are tedious and impertinent to everybody else : besides that, one cannot keep one's own private affairs too secret. Whatever you think your own excellencies may be, do not affectedly display them in company ; nor labour, as many people do, to give that turn to the conversation which may supply you with an opportunity of exhibiting them. If they are real, they will infallibly be discovered without your pointing them out yourself, and with much more advantage. Never maintain an argument with heat and clamour, though you think or know yourself to be in the right ; but give your opinion modestly and coolly, which is the only way to convince ; and if that does not do, try to change the conversation, by saying, with good humour, 'We shall hardly convince one another, nor is it necessary that we should, so let us talk of something else.'

134. Avoid as much as you can, in mixed companies, argumentative, polemical conversations ; which, though they should not, yet certainly do, indispose, for a time, the contending parties towards each other : and, if the controversy grows warm and noisy, endeavour to put an end to it by some genteel levity or joke.

COMMON ERRORS IN CONVERSATION.

135. Remember that there is a local propriety to be observed in all companies ; and that what is extremely proper in one company may be, and often is, highly improper in another. The jokes, the *bons mots*, the little adventures, which may do very well in one company, will seem flat and tedious when related in another. The particular characters, the habits, the cant of one company may give merit to a word, or a gesture, which would have none at all if divested of those accidental circumstances. Here people very commonly err ; and fond of something that has entertained them in one company, and in certain circumstances, repeat it with emphasis in another, where it is either insipid, or, it may be, offensive, by being ill-timed or misplaced. Nay, they often do it with this silly preamble : ‘I will tell you an excellent thing ;’ or, ‘I will tell you the best thing in the world.’ This raises expectations, which when absolutely disappointed, make the relator of this excellent thing look, very undeservedly, like a fool.

136. Take great care never to tell in one company what you see or hear in another, much less to divert the present company at the expense of the last ; but let discretion and secrecy be known parts of your character. They will

carry you much farther, and much safer, than more shining talents.

137. Neither retail nor receive scandal willingly ; for though the defamation of others may, for the present gratify the malignity or the pride of our hearts, cool reflection will draw very disadvantageous conclusions from such a disposition ; and in the case of scandal, as in that of robbery, the receiver is always thought as bad as the thief.

138. Mimicry, which is the common and favourite amusement of little, low minds, is in the utmost contempt with great ones. It is the lowest and most illiberal of all buffoonery. Neither practise it yourself, nor applaud it in others. Besides that, the person mimicked is insulted ; and an insult is never forgiven.

139. Talk often, but never long ; in that case, if you do not please, at least you are sure not to tire your hearers. Pay your own reckoning, but do not treat the whole company ; this being one of the very few cases in which people do not care to be treated, every one being fully convinced that he has wherewithal to pay.

140. Take care never to seem dark and mysterious, which is not only a very unamiable character, but a very suspicious one too ; if you seem mysterious with others, they will be really so with you, and you will know nothing. The height of abilities is, to have *volto sciolto*, and *pensieri stretti* ; that is, a frank, open, and ingenuous exterior, with a prudent and reserved interior ; to be upon your own guard, and yet, by a seeming natural openness, to put people off of theirs. Depend upon it, nine in ten of every company you are in, will avail themselves of every indiscreet and unguarded expression of yours, if they can turn it to their own advantage.

A prudent reserve is therefore as necessary as a seeming openness is prudent. Always look people in the face when you speak to them ; the not doing it is thought to imply conscious guilt ; besides that, you lose the advantage of observing by their countenances what impression your discourse makes upon them.

141. Adapt your conversation to the people you are conversing with. A man of the world must like the cameleon be able to take every different hue ; which is by no means a criminal or abject but a necessary complaisance, for it relates only to manners and not to morals.

142. One word only as to swearing ; and that I hope and believe is more than necessary. You may sometimes hear some people in good company interlard their discourse with oaths, by way of embellishment, as they think ; but you must observe too, that those who do so are never those who contribute in any degree to give that company the denomination of good company. They are always subalterns or people of low education ; for that practice, besides that it has no one temptation to plead, is as silly and illiberal as it is wicked.

THE ART OF PLEASING IN CONVERSATION.

143. I will not pretend to say that the art of pleasing can be reduced to a receipt ; if it could, I am sure that receipt would be worth purchasing at any price. Good sense and good nature are the principal ingredients ; and your own observation, and the good advice of others, must give the right colour and taste to it.

144. The art of pleasing is a very necessary one to possess, but a very difficult one to acquire. It can hardly

be reduced to rules, and your own good sense and observation will teach you more of it than I can. Do as you would be done by is the surest method that I know of pleasing. Observe carefully what pleases you in others, and probably the same thing in you will please others. If you are pleased with the complaisance and attention of others to your humours, your tastes, or your weaknesses, depend upon it the same complaisance and attention on your part to theirs, will equally please them. Take the tone of the company that you are in, and do not pretend to give it ; be serious, gay, or even trifling, as you find the present humour of the company ; this is an attention due from every individual to the majority. Do not tell stories in company ; there is nothing more tedious and disagreeable ; if by chance you know a very short story, and exceedingly applicable to the present subject of conversation, tell it in as few words as possible ; and even then throw out that you do not love to tell stories, but that the shortness of it tempted you.

145. A man of the best parts, and the greatest learning, if he does not know the world by his own experience and observation, will be very absurd ; and, consequently, very unwelcome in company. He may say very good things ; but they will probably be so ill-timed, misplaced, or improperly addressed, that he had much better hold his tongue. Full of his own matter, and uninformed of, or inattentive to, the particular circumstances and situations of the company, he vents it indiscriminately ; he puts some people out of countenance ; he shocks others ; and frightens all, who dread what may come out next.

146. Never give the tone to the company, but take it from them ; and labour more to put them in conceit with themselves, than to make them admire you. Those whom

you can make like themselves better, will, I promise you, like you very well.

147. From the moment that you are dressed, and go out, pocket all your knowledge with your watch, and never pull it out in company unless desired : the producing of the one unasked implies that you are weary of the company ; and the producing of the other unrequired will make the company weary of you. Company is a republic too jealous of its liberties to suffer a dictator even for a quarter of an hour ; and yet in that, as in all republics, there are some few who really govern ; but then it is by seeming to disclaim, instead of attempting to usurp, the power : that is the occasion in which manners, dexterity, address, and the undefinable *je ne sais quoi* triumph ; if properly exerted, their conquest is sure, and the more lasting for not being perceived.

WIT IN CONVERSATION.

148. That ready wit which you so partially allow me, and so justly Sir Charles Williams, may create many admirers ; but, take my word for it, it makes few friends. It shines and dazzles like the noonday sun, but, like that too, is very apt to scorch, and therefore is always feared. The milder morning and evening light and heat of that planet, soothe and calm our minds. Good sense, complaisance, gentleness of manners, attentions, and graces, are the only things that truly engage, and durably keep, the heart at long run. Never seek for wit ; if it presents itself well and good, but even in that case let your judgment interpose, and take care that it be not at the expense of anybody.

149. The temptation of saying a smart and witty thing, or *bon mot*, and the malicious applause with which it is commonly received, have made people who can say them, and, still oftener, people who think they can, but cannot, and yet try, more enemies, and implacable ones too, than any one other thing that I know of.

150. It is a decided folly to lose a friend for a jest ; but, in my mind, it is not a much less degree of folly, to make an enemy of an indifferent and neutral person, for the sake of a *bon mot*.

151. It is commonly said, and more particularly by Lord Shaftesbury, that ridicule is the best test of truth ; for that it will not stick where it is not just. I deny it. A truth learned in a certain light, and attacked in certain words, by men of wit and humour, may, and often doth, become ridiculous, at least so far, that the truth is only remembered and repeated for the sake of the ridicule.

152. Pleasure or malignity often gives ridicule a weight which it does not deserve.

Good Breeding.



GOOD BREEDING NECESSARY.

153. Observe carefully the behaviour and manners of those who are distinguished by their good breeding ; imitate, nay, endeavour to excel, that you may at least reach them ; and be convinced that good breeding is, to all worldly qualifications, what charity is to all Christian virtues.

154. Whenever you find yourself engaged insensibly in favour of anybody, of no superior merit nor distinguished talents, examine, and see what it is that has made those impressions upon you : you will find it to be that *douceur*, that gentleness of manners, that air and address, which I have so often recommended to you ; and from thence draw this obvious conclusion, that what pleases you in them will please others in you ; for we are all made of the same clay, though some of the lumps are a little finer, and some a little coarser ; but, in general, the surest way to judge of others is to examine and analyse one's self thoroughly.

155. Pleasing in company is the only way of being pleased in it yourself. Sense and knowledge are the first and necessary foundations for pleasing in company ; but they will by no means do alone, and they will never be perfectly

welcome, if they are not accompanied with manners and attentions.

156. Know that as learning, honour, and virtue are absolutely necessary to gain you the esteem and admiration of mankind ; politeness and good breeding are equally necessary to make you welcome and agreeable in conversation and common life. Great talents, such as honour, virtue, learning, and parts, are above the generality of the world ; who neither possess them themselves, nor judge of them rightly in others : but all people are judges of the lesser talents, such as civility, affability, and an obliging, agreeable address and manner ; because they feel the good effects of them, as making society easy and pleasing. Good sense must, in many cases, determine good breeding ; because the same thing that would be civil at one time, and to one person, may be quite otherwise at another time, and to another person ; but there are some general rules of good breeding, that hold always true, and in all cases.

MANNERS ADORN VIRTUE AND KNOWLEDGE.

157. To be well bred without ceremony, easy without negligence, steady and intrepid with modesty, genteel without affectation, insinuating without meanness, cheerful without being noisy, frank without indiscretion, and secret without mysteriousness ; to know the proper time and place for whatever you say or do, and to do it with an air of condition : all this is not so soon nor so easily learned as people imagine, but requires observation and time. The world is an immense folio, which demands a great deal of time and attention to be read and understood as it ought to be.

158. In the common manners of social life, every man of common sense hath the rudiments, the A B C of civility; the means not to offend; and even wishes to please: and, if he hath any real merit, will be received and tolerated in good company. But that is far from being enough; for though he may be received, he will never be desired; though he does not offend, he will never be loved, but, like some little, insignificant, neutral power, surrounded by great ones, he will neither be feared nor courted by any; but, by turns, invaded by all, whenever it is their interest. A most contemptible situation! Whereas, a man who hath carefully attended to and experienced the various workings of the heart, and the artifices of the head; and who, by one shade, can trace the progression of the whole colour; who can at the proper times employ all the several means of persuading the understanding and engaging the heart; may and will have enemies; but will and must have friends; he may be opposed, but he will be supported too; his talents may excite the jealousy of some, but his engaging arts will make him beloved by many more; he will be considerable, he will be considered. Many different qualifications must conspire to form such a man, and to make him at once respectable and amiable, and the least must be joined to the greatest; the latter would be unavailing without the former, and the former would be futile and frivolous without the latter.

159. Manners, though the last, and it may be the least, ingredient of real merit are, however, very far from being useless in its composition; they adorn and give an additional force and lustre to both virtue and knowledge. They prepare and smooth the way for the progress of both; and are, I fear, with the bulk of mankind, more engaging than either. Remember, then, the infinite advantage of manners;

cultivate and improve your own to the utmost : good sense will suggest the great rules to you, good company will do the rest.

RULES TO BE OBSERVED.

160. It will be to very little purpose for you to frequent good company, if you do not conform to, and learn their manners ; if you are not attentive to please, and well bred with the easiness of a man of fashion. As you must attend to your manners, so you must not neglect your person ; but take care to be very clean, well dressed, and genteel ; to have no disagreeable attitudes, nor awkward tricks ; which many people use themselves to, and then cannot leave them off.

161. It is extremely rude not to give the proper attention, and a civil answer, when people speak to you ; or to go away, or be doing something else, while they are speaking to you ; for that convinces them that you despise them, and do not think it worth your while to hear or answer what they say. I dare say I need not tell you how rude it is to take the best place in a room, or to seize immediately upon what you like at table, without offering first to help others, as if you considered nobody but yourself. On the contrary, you should always endeavour to procure all the conveniences you can to the people you are with.

162. All the talents in the world will want all their lustre, and some part of their use too, if they are not adorned with that easy good breeding, that engaging manner, and those graces, which seduce and prepossess people in your favour at first sight. A proper care of your person is by no means to be neglected ; always extremely clean ; upon proper occasions, fine. Your carriage genteel, and your motions

graceful. Take particular care of your manner and address when you present yourself in company. Let them be respectful without meanness, easy without too much familiarity, genteel without affectation, and insinuating without any seeming art or design.

163. It is good breeding alone that can prepossess people in your favour at first sight : more time being necessary to discover greater talents. This good breeding, you know, does not consist in low bows and formal ceremony ; but in an easy, civil, and respectful behaviour. You will therefore take care to answer with complaisance when you are spoken to ; to place yourself at the lower end of the table, unless bid to go higher ; not to eat awkwardly or dirtily ; not to sit when others stand : and to do all this with an air of complaisance, and not with a grave, sour look, as if you did it all unwillingly. I do not mean a silly, insipid smile, that fools have when they would be civil ; but an air of sensible good humour. I hardly know anything so difficult to attain or so necessary to possess, as perfect good breeding, which is equally inconsistent with a stiff formality, an impertinent forwardness, and an awkward bashfulness. A little ceremony is often necessary ; a certain degree of firmness is absolutely so ; and an outward modesty is extremely becoming : the knowledge of the world and your own observations must, and alone can, tell you the proper quantities of each.

LES BIENSÉANCES.

164. *Les bienséances* are a most necessary part of the knowledge of the world. They consist in the relations of persons, things, time, and place ; good sense points them

out, good company perfects them (supposing always an attention and a desire to please), and good policy recommends them.

165. That easiness of carriage and behaviour, which is exceedingly engaging, widely differs from negligence and inattention, and by no means implies that one may do whatever one pleases ; it only means that one is not to be stiff, formal, embarrassed, disconcerted, and ashamed, like country bumpkins, and people who have never been in good company ; but it requires great attention to, and a scrupulous observation of *les bienséances* : whatever one ought to do is to be done with ease and unconcern ; whatever is improper must not be done at all.

166. The characteristic of a well-bred man is, to converse with his inferiors without insolence, and with his superiors with respect and with ease. He talks to kings without concern ; he trifles with women of the first condition with familiarity, gaiety, but respect ; and converses with his equals, whether he is acquainted with them or not, upon general, common topics, that are not, however, quite frivolous, without the least concern of mind or awkwardness of body : neither of which can appear to advantage but when they are perfectly easy.

LOCAL CUSTOMS.

167. Good sense bids one be civil, and endeavour to please ; though nothing but experience and observation can teach one the means, properly adapted to time, place, and persons. This knowledge is the true object of a gentleman's travelling, if he travels as he ought to do. By frequenting

good company in every country, he himself becomes of every country ; he is no longer an Englishman, a Frenchman, or an Italian ; but he is an European : he adopts, respectively, the best manners of every country ; and is a Frenchman at Paris, an Italian at Rome, an Englishman at London.

168. Modes and manners vary in different places, and at different times ; you must keep pace with them, know them, and adopt them, wherever you find them.

169. Another important point of *les bienséances*, seldom enough attended to, is, not to run your own present humour and disposition indiscriminately against everybody : but to observe, conform to, and adopt theirs.

170. A man of sense carefully attends to the local manners of the respective places where he is, and takes for his models those persons whom he observes to be at the head of the fashion and good breeding. He watches how they address themselves to their superiors, how they accost their equals, and how they treat their inferiors ; and lets none of those little niceties escape him, which are to good breeding what the last delicate and masterly touches are to a good picture ; and of which the vulgar have no notion, but by which good judges distinguish the master. He attends even to their air, dress, and motions, and imitates them, liberally and not servilely ; he copies, but does not mimic.

171. There is a natural good breeding which occurs to every man of common sense, and is practised by every man of common good nature. This good breeding is general, independent of modes ; and consists in endeavours to please and oblige our fellow-creatures by all good offices, short of moral duties. This will be practised by a good-natured

American savage, as essentially as by the best-bred European. But then, I do not take it to extend to the sacrifice of one's own conveniences, for the sake of other people's. Utility introduced this sort of good breeding, as it introduced commerce; and established a truck of the little *agrémens* and pleasures of life. I sacrifice such a conveniency to you, you sacrifice another to me; this commerce circulates, and every individual finds his account in it upon the whole. The third sort of good breeding is local, and is variously modified, in not only different countries, but in different towns of the same country. But it must be founded upon the two former sorts: they are the matter; to which, in this case, fashion and custom only give the different shapes and impressions. Whoever has the two first sorts will easily acquire this third sort of good breeding, which depends singly upon attention and observation. It is, properly, the polish, the lustre, the last finishing strokes of good breeding.

172. As to the modes of it, indeed, they vary according to persons, places, and circumstances, and are only to be acquired by observation and experience; but the substance of it is everywhere and eternally the same. Good manners are, to particular societies, what good morals are to society in general; their cement, and their security. And, as laws are enacted to enforce good morals, or at least to prevent the ill effects of bad ones; so there are certain rules of civility, universally implied and received, to enforce good manners and punish bad ones.

173. Mutual complaisances, attentions, and sacrifices of little conveniences, are as natural an implied compact between civilised people, as protection and obedience are between kings and subjects: whoever, in either case, violates that compact, justly forfeits all advantages arising from it.

LITTLE ATTENTIONS.

174. There is a certain concurrence of various little circumstances, which compose what the French call *l'aimable* ; and which, now you are entering into the world, you ought to make it your particular study to acquire. Without them, your learning will be pedantry, your conversation often improper, always unpleasant, and your figure, however good in itself, awkward and unengaging. A diamond, while rough, has indeed its intrinsic value ; but, till polished, is of no use, and would neither be sought for nor worn.

175. Good sense, and good nature, suggest civility in general ; but in good breeding there are a thousand little delicacies which are established only by custom ; and it is these little elegancies of manners which distinguish a courtier, and a man of fashion, from the vulgar.

176. Nothing is more insulting, more mortifying, and less forgiven, than avowedly to take pains to make a man feel a mortifying inferiority in knowledge, rank, fortune, &c. In the two last articles, it is unjust, they not being in his power ; and, in the first, it is both ill-bred and ill-natured. Good breeding, and good nature, do incline us rather to help and raise people up to ourselves, than to mortify and depress them : and, in truth, our own private interest concurs in it, as it is making ourselves so many friends, instead of so many enemies. The constant practice of what the French call *les attentions* is a most necessary ingredient in the art of pleasing ; they flatter the self-love of those to whom they are shown ; they engage, they captivate, more than things of much greater importance. The duties of social life every man is obliged to discharge ; but these

attentions are voluntary acts, the free-will offerings of good breeding and good nature ; they are received, remembered, and returned as such. Women particularly have a right to them ; and any omission, in that respect, is downright ill-breeding.

177. There are little attentions, which are infinitely engaging, and which sensibly affect that degree of pride and self-love, which is inseparable from human nature, as they are unquestionable proofs of the regard and consideration which we have for the persons to whom we pay them. As, for example, to observe the little habits, the likings, the antipathies, and the tastes of those whom we would gain ; and then take care to provide them with the one, and to secure them from the other ; giving them, genteelly, to understand that you had observed they liked such a dish, or such a room, for which reason you had prepared it : or, on the contrary, that having observed they had an aversion to such a dish, a dislike to such a person, &c., you had taken care to avoid presenting them. Such attention to such trifles flatters self-love much more than greater things, as it makes people think themselves almost the only objects of your thoughts and care.

178. Great merit, or great failings, will make you respected or despised ; but trifles, little attentions, mere nothings, either done, or neglected, will make you either liked or disliked, in the general run of the world.

DIGNIFIED MANNERS.

179. There is a certain dignity of manners absolutely necessary, to make even the most valuable character either respected or respectable.

180. This dignity of manners, which I recommend so much to you, is not only as different from pride as true courage is from blustering, or true wit from joking, but is absolutely inconsistent with it ; for nothing vilifies and degrades more than pride. The pretensions of the proud man are oftener treated with sneer and contempt, than with indignation ; as we offer ridiculously too little to a tradesman who asks ridiculously too much for his goods ; but we do not haggle with one who only asks a just and reasonable price.

181. Horse-play, romping, frequent and loud fits of laughter, jokes, waggers, and indiscriminate familiarity, will sink both merit and knowledge into a degree of contempt. They compose at most a merry fellow, and a merry fellow was never yet a respectable man. Indiscriminate familiarity either offends your superiors, or else dubs you their dependent and led captain. It gives your inferiors just but troublesome and improper claims of equality.

182. A certain degree of exterior seriousness in looks and motions gives dignity without excluding wit and decent cheerfulness, which are always serious themselves.

183. A joker is near akin to a buffoon ; and neither of them is the least related to wit. Whoever is admitted or sought for, in company, upon any other account than that of his merit and manners, is never respected there, but only made use of. We will have such-a-one, for he sings prettily ; we will invite such-a-one to a ball, for he dances well ; we will have such-a-one at supper, for he is always joking and laughing ; we will ask another, because he plays deep at all games, or because he can drink a great deal. These are all vilifying distinctions, mortifying preferences, and exclude all ideas of esteem and regard. Whoever *is had* (as

it is called) in company, for the sake of any one thing singly, is singly that thing, and will never be considered in any other light ; consequently never respected, let his merits be what they will.

184. Abject flattery and indiscriminate assentation degrades, as much as indiscriminate contradiction and noisy debate disgust. But a modest assertion of one's own opinion, and a complaisant acquiescence in other people's, preserve dignity. Vulgar, low expressions, awkward motions and address, vilify, as they imply either a very low turn of mind, or low education and low company.

185. In mixed companies, whoever is admitted to make part of them is, for the time at least, supposed to be upon a footing of equality with the rest ; and consequently, as there is no one principal object of awe and respect, people are apt to take a greater latitude in their behaviour, and to be less upon their guard ; and so they may, provided it be within certain bounds, which are upon no occasion to be transgressed. But, upon these occasions, though no one is entitled to distinguished marks of respect, every one claims and very justly, every mark of civility and good breeding. Ease is allowed, but carelessness and negligence are strictly forbidden. If a man accosts you, and talks to you ever so dully or frivolously, it is worse than rudeness, it is brutality to show him, by a manifest inattention to what he says, that you think him a fool or a blockhead, and not worth hearing. It is much more so with regard to women, who, of whatever rank they are, are entitled, in consideration of their sex, not only to an attentive, but an officious good breeding from men. Their little wants, likings, dislikes, preferences, antipathies, fancies, whims, and even impertinences, must be officiously attended to, flattered, and, if possible, guessed at.

and anticipated, by a well-bred man. You must never usurp to yourself those conveniences and *agrémens* which are of common right, such as the best places, the best dishes, &c.; but, on the contrary, always decline them yourself, and offer them to others; who, in their turns, will offer them to you: so that, upon the whole, you will, in your turn, enjoy your share of the common right. It would be endless for me to enumerate all the particular instances in which a well-bred man shows his good breeding in good company; and it would be injurious to you to suppose that your own good sense will not point them out to you; and then your own good nature will recommend, and your self-interest enforce, the practice.

186. There is a sort of good breeding, in which people are the most apt to fail, from a very mistaken notion that they cannot fail at all. I mean, with regard to one's most familiar friends and acquaintances, or those who really are our inferiors; and there, undoubtedly, a greater degree of ease is not only allowed, but proper, and contributes much to the comforts of a private, social life. But that ease and freedom have their bounds too, which must by no means be violated.

187. The most familiar and intimate habitudes, connections, and friendships require a degree of good breeding, both to preserve and cement them.

Company—Good and Bad.

GOOD MANNERS CONTAGIOUS.

188. Good sense can only give you the great outlines of good breeding ; but observation and usage can alone give you the delicate touches and the fine colouring. You will naturally endeavour to show the utmost respect to people of certain ranks and characters, and consequently you will show it ; but the proper, the delicate manner of showing that respect, nothing but observation and time can give.

189. Easy respect is the perfection of good breeding, which nothing but superior good sense, or a long usage of the world, can produce.

190. Take variety of the best company, wherever you are ; be minutely attentive to every word and action ; imitate respectively those whom you observe to be distinguished and considered for any one accomplishment, then mix all those several accomplishments together, and serve them up yourself to others.

191. Every man becomes, to a certain degree, what the people he generally converses with are. He catches their air, their manners, and even their way of thinking. If he

observes with attention, he will catch them soon, but if he does not, he will at long run contract them insensibly.

192. We are, in truth, more than half what we are by imitation. The great point is, to choose good models, and to study them with care. People insensibly contract, not only the air, the manners, and the vices of those with whom they commonly converse, but their virtues, too, and even their way of thinking. This is so true, that I have known very plain understandings catch a certain degree of wit, by constantly conversing with those who had a great deal.

193. Be convinced that the good breeding, the *tournure*, *la douceur dans les manières*, which alone are to be acquired at courts, are not the showish trifles only which some people call or think them : they are a solid good ; they prevent a great deal of real mischief ; they create, adorn, and strengthen friendships : they keep hatred within bounds ; they promote good humour and good will in families, where the want of good breeding and gentleness of manners is commonly the original cause of discord. Get, then, before it is too late, a habit of these *mitiores virtutes* : practise them upon every the least occasion, that they may be easy and familiar to you upon the greatest ; for they lose a great degree of their merit if they seem laboured, and only called in upon extraordinary occasions.

WOMEN'S SOCIETY.

194. The great secret is the art of pleasing : and that art is to be attained by every man who has a good fund of common sense. If you are pleased with any person, examine why ; do as he does, and you will charm others by the same things which please you in him. To be liked by women,

you must be esteemed by men ; and to please men, you must be agreeable to women. Vanity is unquestionably the ruling passion in women ; and it is much flattered by the attentions of a man who is generally esteemed by men : when his merit has received the stamp of their approbation, women make it current, that is to say, put him in fashion. On the other hand, if a man has not received the last polish from women, he may be estimable among men, but he will never be amiable. The concurrence of the two sexes is as necessary to the perfection of our being, as to the formation of it. Go among women with the good qualities of your sex, and you will acquire from them the softness and the graces of theirs. Men will then add affection to the esteem which they before had for you. Women are the only refiners of the merit of men ; it is true they cannot add weight, but they polish and give lustre to it.

195. The company of women of fashion will improve your manners, though not your understanding ; and that complaisance and politeness, which are so useful in men's company, can only be acquired in women's.

196. Women have great influence as to a man's fashionable character ; and an awkward man will never have their votes ; which, by the way, are very numerous, and much oftener counted than weighed.

197. Now, though I would not recommend to you to go into women's company in search of solid knowledge or judgment, yet it has its use in other respects ; for it certainly polishes the manners, and gives *une certaine tournure*, which is very necessary in the course of the world ; and which Englishmen have generally less of than any people in the world.

THE VULGAR MAN.

198. A vulgar man is captious and jealous ; eager and impetuous about trifles. He suspects himself to be slighted, thinks everything that is said meant at him ; if the company happens to laugh, he is persuaded they laugh at him ; he grows angry and testy, says something very impertinent, and draws himself into a scrape, by showing what he calls a proper spirit, and asserting himself. A man of fashion does not suppose himself to be either the sole or principal object of the thoughts, looks, or words of the company ; and never suspects that he is either slighted or laughed at, unless he is conscious that he deserves it. And if (which very seldom happens) the company is absurd or ill-bred enough to do either, he does not care twopence, unless the insult be so gross and plain as to require satisfaction of another kind. As he is above trifles, he is never vehement and eager about them ; and, wherever they are concerned, rather acquiesces than wrangles. A vulgar man's conversation always savours strongly of the lowness of his education and company. It turns chiefly upon his domestic affairs, his servants, the excellent order he keeps in his own family, and the little anecdotes of the neighbourhood ; all which he relates with emphasis, as interesting matters. He is a man gossip.

199. Vulgarism in language is the next and distinguishing characteristic of bad company and a bad education. A man of fashion avoids nothing with more care than that. Proverbial expressions and trite sayings are the flowers of the rhetoric of a vulgar man. Would he say that men differ in their tastes, he both supports and adorns that opinion by the good old saying, as he respectfully calls it, that *what is*

one man's meat is another man's poison. If anybody attempts being *smart*, as he calls it, upon him, he gives them *tit for tat*, ay, that he does. He has always some favourite word for the time being, which, for the sake of using often, he commonly abuses. Such as *vastly* angry, *vastly* kind, *vastly* handsome, and *vastly* ugly. Even his pronunciation of proper words carries the mark of the beast along with it. He calls the earth *yearth*; he is *obleiged* not *obliged* to you. He goes *to wards* and not towards such a place. He sometimes affects hard words, by way of ornament, which he always mangles like a learned woman. A man of fashion never has recourse to proverbs and vulgar aphorisms, uses neither favourite words nor hard words; but takes great care to speak very correctly and grammatically, and to pronounce properly; that is, according to the usage of the best companies.

200. An awkward address, ungraceful attitudes and actions, and a certain left-handedness (if I may use that word), loudly proclaim low education and low company; for it is impossible to suppose that a man can have frequented good company, without having caught something, at least, of their air and motions. A new raised man is distinguished in a regiment by his awkwardness; but he must be impenetrably dull if, in a month or two's time, he cannot perform at least the common manual exercise, and look like a soldier. The very accoutrements of a man of fashion are grievous encumbrances to a vulgar man. He is at a loss what to do with his hat when it is not upon his head; his cane (if unfortunately he wears one) is at perpetual war with every cup of tea or coffee he drinks; destroys them first, and then accompanies them in their fall.

201. His clothes fit him so ill, and constrain him so

much, that he seems rather their prisoner than their proprietor. He presents himself in company like a criminal in a court of justice ; his very air condemns him ; and people of fashion will no more connect themselves with the one, than people of character will with the other. This repulse drives and sinks him into low company ; a gulf from whence no man, after a certain age, ever emerged.

DIFFERENT SETS.

202. The next thing to the choice of your friends is the choice of your company. Endeavour as much as you can to keep company with people above you. There you rise as much as you sink with people below you, for you are whatever the company you keep is. Do not mistake when I say company above you, and think that I mean with regard to their birth ; that is the least consideration : but I mean with regard to their merit, and the light in which the world considers them.

203. There are two sorts of good company : one which is called the *beau monde*, consists of people who have the lead in courts and the gay part of life ; the other consists of those who are distinguished by some peculiar merit or who excel in some particular and valuable art or science.

204. Good company is not what respective sets of company are pleased either to call or think themselves ; but it is that company which all the people of the place call and acknowledge to be good company, notwithstanding some objections which they may form to some of the individuals who compose it. It consists chiefly (but by no means without exception) of people of considerable birth, rank, and

character ; for people of neither birth nor rank are frequently and very justly admitted into it, if distinguished by any peculiar merit, or eminency in any liberal art or science. Nay, so motley a thing is good company, that many people, without birth, rank, or merit, intrude into it by their own forwardness, and others slide into it by the protection of some considerable person ; and some even of indifferent characters and morals make part of it. But, in the main, the good part preponderates, and people of infamous and blasted characters are never admitted. In this fashionable good company, the best manners and the best language of the place are most unquestionably to be learnt ; for they establish and give the tone to both, which are therefore called the language and manner of good company, there being no legal tribunal to ascertain either.

205. A company consisting wholly of people of the first quality cannot, for that reason, be called good company in the common acceptation of the phrase, unless they are, into the bargain, the fashionable and accredited company of the place ; for people of the very first quality can be as silly, as ill-bred, and as worthless, as people of the meanest degree. On the other hand, a company consisting entirely of people of very low condition, whatever their merit or parts may be, can never be called good company ; and consequently should not be much frequented, though by no means despised.

206. A company wholly composed of men of learning, though greatly to be valued and respected, is not meant by the words *good company* : they cannot have the easy manners and *tournure* of the world, as they do not live in it. If you can bear your part well in such a company, it is extremely right to be in it sometimes, and you will be but

more esteemed, in other companies, for having a place in that. But then do not let it engross you ; for if you do, you will be only considered as one of the *litterati* by profession, which is not the way either to shine or rise in the world.

207. The company of professed wits and poets is extremely inviting to most young men, who if they have wit themselves are pleased with it, and if they have none are sillily proud of being one of it, but it should be frequented with moderation and judgment, and you should by no means give yourself up to it.

208. Every set of company differs in some particulars from another ; and a man of business must, in the course of his life, have to do with all sorts. It is a very great advantage to know the languages of the several countries one travels in ; and different companies may in some degree be considered as different countries ; each has its distinctive language, customs, and manners ; know them all, and you will wonder at none.

BAD COMPANY.

209. A man who is not perfectly well bred is unfit for good company and unwelcome in it, will consequently dislike it soon, afterwards renounce it, and be reduced to solitude, or what is worse, low and bad company.

210. What I mean by low company, and which should by all means be avoided, is the company of those, who, absolutely insignificant and contemptible in themselves, think they are honoured in being in your company, and who flatter every vice and folly you have in order to engage you to converse with them. The pride of being the first in

the company is but too common ; but it is very silly, and very prejudicial. Nothing in the world lets down a character more than that wrong turn. You may possibly ask me whether a man has it always in his power to get into the best company? and how? I say, Yes, he has, by deserving it ; provided he is but in circumstances which enable him to appear upon the footing of a gentleman. Merit and good breeding will make their way everywhere. Knowledge will introduce him, and good breeding will endear him to the best companies ; for, as I have often told you, politeness and good breeding are absolutely necessary to adorn any or all other good qualities or talents. Without them, no knowledge, no perfection whatsoever, is seen in its best light. The scholar, without good breeding, is a pedant ; the philosopher, a cynic ; the soldier, a brute ; and every man disagreeable.

211. There is commonly, in young people, a facility that makes them unwilling to refuse anything that is asked of them : a *mauvaise honte* that makes them ashamed to refuse ; and, at the same time, an ambition of pleasing and shining in the company they keep ; these several causes produce the best effect in good company, but the very worst in bad. If people had no vices but their own, few would have so many as they have. For my own part, I would sooner wear other people's clothes than their vices ; and they would sit upon me just as well. I hope you will have none ; but, if ever you have, I beg at least they may be all your own. Vices of adoption are, of all others, the most disgraceful and unpardonable.

212. Choose your pleasures for yourself, and do not let them be imposed upon you. Follow nature, and not fashion : weigh the present enjoyment of your pleasures

against the necessary consequences of them, and then let your own common sense determine your choice.

213. Let no conversation, no example, no fashion, no *bon mot*, no silly desire of seeming to be above, what most knaves, and many fools, call prejudice, ever tempt you to avow, excuse, extenuate, or laugh at the least breach of morality ; but show upon all occasions, and take all occasions to show, a detestation and abhorrence of it.

DISTINGUISHED MANNERS.

214. Nothing forms a young man so much as being used to keep respectable and superior company, where a constant regard and attention is necessary. It is true, this is at first a disagreeable state of restraint ; but it soon grows habitual, and consequently easy ; and you are amply paid for it, by the improvement you make, and the credit it gives you.

215. Observe and imitate the address, the arts, and the manners of those *qui ont du monde* : see by what methods they first make, and afterwards improve, impressions in their favour. Those impressions are much oftener owing to little causes than to intrinsic merit ; which is less volatile, and hath not so sudden an effect.

216. You must be in the pleasures in order to learn the manners of good company. In premeditated or in formal business, people conceal, or at least endeavour to conceal, their characters ; whereas pleasures discover them, and the heart breaks out through the guard of the understanding.

217. What the French justly call *les manières nobles*, are only to be acquired in the very best companies. They are the distinguishing characteristics of men of fashion : people

of low education never wear them so close, but that some part or other of the original vulgarity appears. *Les manières nobles* equally forbid insolent contempt or low envy and jealousy. Low people, in good circumstances, fine clothes, and equipages, will insolently show contempt for all those who cannot afford as fine clothes, as good an equipage, and who have not (as their term is) as much money in their pockets: on the other hand, they are gnawed with envy, and cannot help discovering it, of those who surpass them in any of these articles, which are far from being sure criterions of merit. They are, likewise, jealous of being slighted; and, consequently, suspicious and captious: they are eager and hot about trifles, because trifles were, at first, their affairs of consequence. *Les manières nobles* imply exactly the reverse of all this. Study them early; you cannot make them too habitual and familiar to you.

THE GRACES.

218. Next to manners are exterior graces of person and address, which adorn manners, as manners adorn knowledge. To say that they please, engage, and charm, as they most indisputably do, is saying that one should do everything possible to acquire them.

219. It must be owned that the graces do not seem to be natives of Great Britain, and I doubt the best of us here have more of the rough than the polished diamond. Since barbarism drove them out of Greece and Rome, they seem to have taken refuge in France, where their temples are numerous, and their worship the established one. Examine yourself seriously, why such and such people please and engage

you, more than such and such others of equal merit, and you will always find, that it is because the former have the graces, and the latter not. I have known many a woman with an exact shape, and a symmetrical assemblage of beautiful features, please nobody ; while others, with very moderate shapes and features, have charmed everybody. Why ? because Venus will not charm so much without her attendant graces, as they will without her. Among men how often have I seen the most solid merit and knowledge neglected, unwelcome, or even rejected, for want of them ? While flimsy parts, little knowledge, and less merit, introduced by the graces, have been received, cherished, and admired. Even virtue, which is moral beauty, wants some of its charms, if unaccompanied by them.

220. Let awkward, ungraceful, inelegant, and dull fellows say what they will on behalf of their solid matter and strong reasonings : and let them despise all those graces and ornaments which engage the senses and captivate the heart ; they will find (though they will possibly wonder why), that their rough, unpolished matter, and their rough, unadorned, but strong arguments, will neither please nor persuade ; but on the contrary will tire out attention and excite disgust.

221. Moral virtues are the foundation of society in general and of friendship in particular ; but attentions, manners, and graces both adorn and strengthen them.

Friends and Acquaintance.



FRIENDSHIP.

222. Be cautious how you contract friendships, but be desirous, and even industrious, to obtain a universal acquaintance.

223. Let your firmness and vigour preserve and invite attachments to you ; but, at the same time, let your manner hinder the enemies of your friends and dependents from becoming yours ; let your enemies be disarmed by the gentleness of your manner, but let them feel at the same time the steadiness of your just resentment ; for there is great difference between bearing malice, which is always ungenerous, and a resolute self-defence, which is always prudent and justifiable.

224. Observe such a degree of reserve with your friends, as not to put yourself in their power, if they should become your enemies ; and such a degree of moderation with your enemies, as not to make it impossible for them to become your friends.

225. In short, take care to make as many personal friends, and as few personal enemies, as possible. I do not

mean, by personal friends, intimate and confidential friends, of which no man can hope to have half-a-dozen in the whole course of his life, but I mean friends in the common acceptation of the word, that is, people who speak well of you, and who would rather do you good than harm, consistently with their own interest, and no farther.

226. A complaisant and agreeable companion may and often does prove a very improper and a very dangerous friend.

SUDDEN FRIENDSHIP TO BE MISTRUSTED.

227. Have a real reserve with almost everybody, and a seeming reserve with almost nobody : for it is very disagreeable to seem reserved, and very dangerous not to be so. Few people find the true medium ; many are ridiculously mysterious and reserved upon trifles, and many imprudently communicative of all that they know.

228. Be upon your guard against those, who, upon very slight acquaintance, obtrude their unasked and unmerited friendship and confidence upon you.

229. If a man with whom you are but barely acquainted, to whom you have made no offers, nor given any marks of friendship, makes you, on a sudden, strong professions of his, receive them with civility, but do not repay them with confidence ; he certainly means to deceive you ; for one man does not fall in love with another at sight.

230. Do not let your vanity and self-love make you suppose that people become your friends at first sight or even upon a short acquaintance. Real friendship is a slow grower, and never thrives unless ingrafted upon a stock of known and reciprocal merit.

Vanity.

231. I do not think that a just consciousness, and the honest pride of doing well can be called vanity ; for vanity is either the silly affectation of good qualities which one has not, or the sillier pride of what does not deserve commendation in itself.

232. Vanity, or to call it by a gentler name, the desire of admiration and applause, is perhaps the most universal principle of human actions ; I do not say that it is the best ; and I will own that it is sometimes the cause of both foolish and criminal effects. But it is so much oftener the principle of right things, that, though they ought to have a better, yet, considering human nature, that principle is to be encouraged and cherished, in consideration of its effects. Where that desire is wanting, we are apt to be indifferent, listless, indolent, and inert ; we do not exert our powers ; and we appear to be as much below ourselves as the vainest man living can desire to appear above what he really is.

233. Vanity, that source of many of our follies, and of some of our crimes, has sunk many a man into company in every light infinitely below himself, for the sake of being the first man in it. There he dictates, is applauded, is admired ; and, for the sake of being the Coryphæus of that wretched

chorus, disgraces and disqualifies himself soon for any better company. Depend upon it you will sink or rise to the level of the company which you commonly keep ; people will judge of you, and not unreasonably, by that. There is good sense in the Spanish saying, ‘Tell me whom you live with, and I will tell you what you are.’)

234. Choose the company of your superiors whenever you can have it : that is the right and true pride. The mistaken and silly pride is, to *primer* among inferiors.

235. Be extremely upon your guard against vanity, the common failing of unexperienced youth ; but particularly against that kind of vanity that dubs a man a coxcomb ; a character which, once acquired, is more indelible than that of the priesthood. It is not to be imagined by how many different ways vanity defeats its own purposes. One man decides peremptorily upon every subject, betrays his ignorance upon many, and shows a disgusting presumption upon the rest.

236. Another desires to appear successful among the women ; he hints at the encouragement he has received from those of the most distinguished rank and beauty, and intimates a particular connection with some one ; if it is true, it is ungenerous ; if false, it is infamous : but in either case he destroys the reputation he wants to get. Some flatter their vanity by little extraneous objects, which have not the least relation to themselves ; such as being descended from, related to, or acquainted with, people of distinguished merit and eminent characters. They talk perpetually of their grandfather such-a-one, their uncle such-a-one, and their intimate friend, Mr. Such-a-one, with whom, possibly, they are hardly acquainted. But admitting it all to be as they would have it, what then ? Have they the more merit

for these accidents? Certainly not. On the contrary, their taking up adventitious, proves their want of intrinsic, merit ; a rich man never borrows.

237. Take this rule for granted as a never-failing one ; that you must never seem to affect the character in which you have a mind to shine. Modesty is the only sure bait when you angle for praise. The affectation of courage will make even a brave man pass only for a bully ; as the affectation of wit will make a man of parts pass for a coxcomb. By this modesty I do not mean timidity and awkward bashfulness. On the contrary, be inwardly firm and steady, know your own value, whatever it may be, and act upon that principle ; but take great care to let nobody discover that you do know your own value. Whatever real merit you have, other people will discover ; and people always magnify their own discoveries, as they lessen those of others.

Miscellaneous.

DANCING, CARVING, ETC.

238. Dancing is in itself a very trifling, silly thing ; but it is one of those established follies to which people of sense are sometimes obliged to conform ; and then they should be able to do it well. And, though I would not have you a dancer, yet, when you do dance, I would have you dance well, as I would have you do everything you do well. There is no one thing so trifling, but which (if it is to be done at all) ought to be done well.

239. Have you learned to carve ? for it is ridiculous not to carve well. A man who tells you gravely that he cannot carve, may as well tell you that he cannot blow his nose ; it is both as necessary and as easy.

240. Never make use of a silly expression, which is the favourite expression, and the absurd excuse of all fools and blockheads ; *I cannot do such a thing* : a thing by no means either morally or physically impossible. I *cannot* attend long together to the same thing, says one fool : that is, he is such a fool that he will not. I remember a very awkward fellow who did not know what to do with his sword, and who always took it off before dinner, saying that he could

not possibly dine with his sword on ; upon which I could not help telling him that I really believed he could, without any probable danger either to himself or others. It is a shame and an absurdity for any man to say that he cannot do all those things which are commonly done by all the rest of mankind.

241. Never, from a mistaken economy, buy a thing you do not want because it is cheap ; or, from a silly pride, because it is dear.

242. Remember, in economy as well as in every other part of life, to have the proper attention to proper objects, and the proper contempt for little ones. A strong mind sees things in their true proportions : a weak one views them through a magnifying medium ; which, like the microscope, makes an elephant of a flea ; magnifies all little objects, but cannot receive great ones. I have known many a man pass for a miser by saving a penny and wrangling for twopence, who was undoing himself at the same time by living above his income and not attending to essential articles which were above his *portée*. The sure characteristic of a sound and strong mind is, to find in everything those certain bounds, *quos ultra citrave nequit consistere rectum*. These boundaries are marked out by a very fine line, which only good sense and attention can discover ; it is much too fine for vulgar eyes. In manners this line is good breeding ; beyond it, is troublesome ceremony ; short of it, is unbecoming negligence and inattention.

DRESS.

243. Dress is a very foolish thing ; and yet it is a very foolish thing for a man not to be well dressed, according to

~~his rank and way of life~~ ; and it is so far from being a disparagement to any man's understanding, that it is rather a proof of it, to be as well dressed as those whom he lives with ; the difference in this case between a man of sense and a fop is, that the fop values himself upon his dress ; and the man of sense laughs at it, at the same time that he knows he must not neglect it.

244. Any affectation whatsoever in dress implies, in my mind, a flaw in the understanding.

245. A man of sense carefully avoids any particular character in his dress ; he is accurately clean for his own sake ; but all the rest is for other people's. He dresses as well, and in the same manner, as the people of sense and fashion of the place where he is. If he dresses better, as he thinks, that is, more than they, he is a fop ; if he dresses worse, he is unpardonably negligent : but of the two, I would rather have a young fellow too much than too little dressed ; the excess on that side will wear off with a little age and reflection ; but if he is negligent at twenty, he will be a sloven at forty, and stink at fifty years old. Dress yourself fine where others are fine, and plain where others are plain ; but take care, always, that your clothes are well made, and fit you, for otherwise they will give you a very awkward air. When you are once well dressed for the day, think no more of it afterwards ; and without any stiffness for fear of discomposing that dress, let all your motions be as easy and natural as if you had no clothes on at all.

246. You cannot imagine how necessary it is to mind all these little things ; for I have seen many people with great talents ill received for want of having these talents too ; and others well received only from their little talents, and who had no great ones.

MOCK AT NO MAN'S BELIEFS.

247. When you frequent places of public worship, as I would have you go to all the different ones you meet with, remember that, however erroneous, they are none of them objects of laughter and ridicule. Honest error is to be pitied, not ridiculed. The object of all the public worships in the world is the same ; it is that great eternal Being, who created everything. The different manners of worship are by no means subjects of ridicule. Each sect thinks its own the best ; and I know no infallible judge in this world to decide which is the best.

248. Remember that errors and mistakes, however gross in matters of opinion, if they are sincere are to be pitied, but not punished, nor laughed at. The blindness of the understanding is as much to be pitied as the blindness of the eyes ; and there is neither jest nor guilt in a man's losing his way in either case. Charity bids us set him right if we can by arguments and persuasions, but charity at the same time forbids either to punish or ridicule his misfortune. Every man's reason is and must be his guide, and I may as well expect that every man should be of my size and complexion as that he should reason just as I do.

249. Let no quibbles of lawyers, no refinements of casuists, break into the plain notions of right and wrong which every man's right reason and plain common sense suggest to him. To do as you would be done by is the plain, sure, and undisputed rule of morality and justice. Stick to that ; and be convinced, that whatever breaks into it in any degree, however speciously it may be turned, and however puzzling it

may be to answer it, is notwithstanding false in itself, unjust and criminal.

CONCLUSION.

250. A tradesman who would succeed in his way must begin by establishing a character of integrity and good manners : without the former no one will go into his shop at all ; without the latter nobody will go there twice. This rule does not exclude the fair arts of trade. He may sell his goods at the best price he can, within certain bounds. He may avail himself of the humour, the whims, and the fantastical tastes of his customers ; but what he warrants to be good must be really so, and what he seriously asserts must be true, or his first fraudulent profits will soon end in a bankruptcy. It is the same in higher life, and in the great business of the world. A man who does not solidly establish and really deserve a character of truth, probity, good manners, and good morals at his first setting out in the world, may impose and shine like a meteor for a very short time, but will very soon vanish and be extinguished with contempt.)

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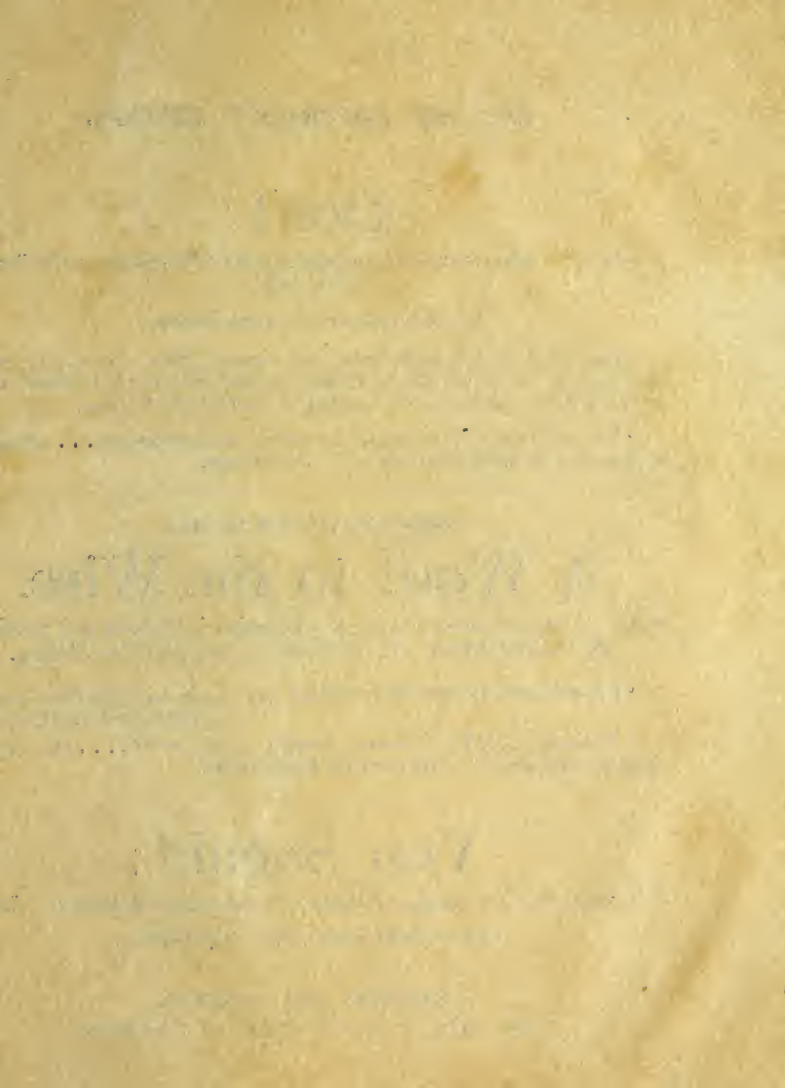
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